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The DUKE of DULUTH

by
Thomas Hall Shastid, M.D.

SUPERSERVICE
TO THE WORLD

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THE DUKE OF DULUTH

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THE DUKE OF DULUTH

BY

THOMAS HALL SHASTID, M. D.,

Author of "Simon of Cyrene,"
"Who Shall Command Thy Heart?"
etc.

IN TWO VOLUMES. Vol. II

DISCARDED

"East is East and West is West, and *ever* the twain shall meet"—at Duluth.
" 'Mount Service' I call it."—Jean herself.

1926

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CHAPTER XXVII

WHAT FURTHER DEPTHS THE GOOD OBSERVERS DROPPED JOHN INTO

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FROM that black, terrible moment onward to the very end of the day, to the very end of many days, John seemed to be walking in a thick mental mist. And never, no matter how hard he tried to be clear concerning the words and events of that period, could he quite remember one of them with absolute assurance. He could bring them back as mere crude, blurred, distorted blotches of experience, and that was all.

It seemed to him that the plain-clothes man conducted a little inquisition of his own while they walked along first one street, then another, to arrive finally at a building near the City Hall—or was it the City Hall itself? There John was searched, and strangely enough, as the officer remarked to the magistrate, nothing incriminating was found on him. "But he had plenty of time," observed the plain-clothes man, shrewdly, "to dispose of the dagger and the money, before I got him." The dagger! The money!

The magistrate (John believed, but was never quite certain) phoned to the coroner, and, turning to

John, demanded: "Do you not remember, young man, that I told you, years ago, that you should not have threatened Andy Polano? *Now* see!"

As John always remembered, he himself, at this point, phoned for Mr. Proteus. Mr. Proteus promptly came—John was always fairly sure about that—conferred with him, told him not to talk to anybody any more, and went along with John—at once, it appeared—to attend the coroner's inquest.

John could never be quite certain when or where that inquest was held. Sometimes it seemed to have taken place on the very day of the death, sometimes not till one day or till two or three days later. Sometimes it appeared to have come off in Andy Polano's inner room, sometimes in Andy Polano's outer room, sometimes in the Northwestern depot, sometimes in the Iron Range Hotel, sometimes in the County Court-house, and sometimes even in Mr. Proteus' office. Always he knew that, at some time, and some where, he was standing, together with a little knot of men, beside the corpse of Andy Polano, and he always remembered distinctly enough that no one, up to that time, had taken the pains to close Andy's vulture-like eyes. There they gazed, those terrible black orbs, still pointed and bright—staring, staring, as if in a wild attempt to view Andy's "fadduh" over on the distant shore.

There were numerous marks of violence about the

little body. The clothes were torn. Andy, plainly enough, had made a gallant struggle for life. Two of his fingers were broken—the doctor, taking them up in his own living hands (and how could anything be living now?) remarked to the jury that this was so. But the horriblest part of the picture was the throat. It was crushed and torn, and, just beneath the Adam's apple, it was punctured and also cut, cut not merely from ear to ear, but deep—deep, almost, enough for the knife, or dagger, that had inflicted the wound to have grated against the bones of the neck. The lips were still distorted in a seemingly furious protest not only at the gross injustice whereby the little man himself had died, but, in addition, at the innumerable outrages which, since the time of Father Abraham, had been committed upon his race. John could almost hear that curled mouth crying, "My fadduh, my fadduh, he tell me you should not to do this."

Alas, poor Andy! Never again would he help to make night hideous in his storm-cave on the bluff. Never again would he hoard the dollars that had been so unspeakably dear to him.

But some one was talking. Who was that?

Ah yes, the plain-clothes man that John had met—when was it? Was it that very day? the day before? ten days after? when? At all events the man who had come up close and looked at him when he had

been talking with Mr. Pressior and Mr. Skooth, and who, again, when he had arisen from the barber's chair, had asked him to take a little walk, was talking to the coroner's jury now.

The plain-clothes man related, in a very profuse, loud and authoritative manner—so that John marvelled how anyone could speak so, there in the presence of death—that he had been moving along Winter Hill Avenue, merely moving along on his beat, when, all at once, some man across the street—a big, strong-looking, but somewhat elderly person—attracted his attention. After a moment or two, he became aware that the big, strong-looking elderly man was gesticulating and attempting to direct the plain-clothes man's attention to a person who was acting very suspiciously at the front door of Andy Polano's—that door in there. He pointed.

"So I just stood still a moment, watching the fellow. It was this fellow here.

"He kept standing by the door for a time with his hand on the latch, listening earnest. Then he opens the door a while, and just pokes his head in and listens again. Then he brings the door to, kind of soft like, and starts fast down the Avenue. He's got a big bundle under his arm.

"When he's gone a little ways, he stops and looks back at Andy's door. Then he goes on a little further, stops and looks back again. Then he goes on down

to Monckton's barber shop, and stops and stands a while, and talks with Mr. Pressior and Mr. Skooth, real estate agents—these two gentlemen here.

"I don't go into Andy's shop at once, but saunters along down to where Pressior and Skooth are talkin' with this young fellow. There I hear 'em holdin' 'im up on a real estate deal, while he, natural enough—seems plumb crazy to get into the shop.

"I saunters on, goes round the block kind of quick, and enters Andy Polano's. Nobody in the front room. Then I looks into the back room yonder. Nobody there. Then I looks into the inner room, *this* room. Here's Andy. He's lyin' acrost a upset chair, eyes wide open, mouth wide open, throat wide open. A pool of blood's on the floor. His cash box is busted, too.

"The back door of that room's wide open, an' I see at once it's been forced from the outside." He gave the proofs.

The man then told of first phoning to the police surgeon, then to the police station, and of going to the barber shop and getting John, and of all that John had said to him on the way to the magistrate. He also told of John's showing him the diploma. "But we never," he concluded, "found anything wrong on him; yet that's *easy* explained."

Mr. Pressior and Mr. Skooth were called in turn, and each corroborated the officer's testimony as to

John's presence with them for a time, just in front of the barber shop, also as to John's evident wish to leave both of them very hurriedly and get into the shop. Each, however, although unasked, gave it as his solemn, if irrelevant, belief that "this splendid young man" could not have committed that crime. "No sir," insisted Mr. Skooth with solemn emphasis, "he ain't the man. I'm a good judge of human nature, an' he never done it."

"Thank Heaven for friends, at least," thought John.

And John actually began to build high hope on the fact that the murderer of Andy had, very plainly, entered and left the building by the back door of the inner room. John himself, as the plain-clothes man had clearly testified, had been observed to leave the place by the *front* door. But, a moment afterward, this rising hope was thrown to the ground.

Some important personage was indicating to some of the others his belief that John had entered the shop by the back door, killed Andy, stolen his money (it appeared by a relative that all of Andy's hoard had really been taken) and then left the building by the same back door. Then, having handed the dagger and Andy's money to some accomplice, and having come round into Winter Hill Avenue, had entered the shop again—this time in the usual way. Then he had taken his diploma. He

had feared, of course, to be seen going off with so large a package from the back door: the fact might be remembered by some one. He wrapped the diploma up himself (the theory presumed) and then left the shop finally by the front entrance. But, being naturally nervous and fearful lest Andy might not, after all, have received his *quietus*, he had stopped and listened, even opened the door and listened, and then had tried to get rapidly off. Having been stopped at Monckton's corner by the two realtors, he had naturally thought to escape their unexpected and unwelcome detention by slipping into the shop.

Then came the climax. People who lived in the upper stories of the buildings which bordered on the alley by which John was supposed to have made his *rear* escape, were called upon, and these declared that they had seen John—*him*, John Gridley Smith—this man who stood before them now, come out of the building with his hands all covered with blood and his face a mass of cuts and bruises, "just as you all can see it at the present moment."

A deep, sickening fear and a wild primeval rage uprose together in John's bosom. Claud! It was Claud who had done all this. He and Claud so closely resembled each other, at least in the more conspicuous and readily observable points, that it was not in the slightest unnatural that strangers to them

both should have been misled. Then, too, Claud's face, as well as John's, had been beaten up and bruised on that day. Claud's motive? For one thing, Andy's money. Claud was very short of funds, as John knew from the fact that Claud had wanted to borrow of him. And Claud never would work, but wished to get everything "in the easiest way." For another thing, Claud hated John Gridley Smith with an undying hatred—chiefly, of course, on account of Jean, but also on account of John's success and his own flat failures, both in business and in scholarship. It was all as plain to John as it was that these well-meaning people were simply mistaken.

Claud, as John believed, had hired Red George to steal John's watch and diploma, write to John that he knew where they were, sell them to Andy just a day or so before John's arrival in Duluth, so that it would be unlikely that any stranger would get to purchase them, and then, when taking John to Andy's shop, to select the very time on which it had been arranged with Claud that Claud should enter the shop by the rear door from the alley. When John should have departed from the shop, then Claud was to make some kind of noise in the inner room. Andy would naturally go into the room to see what the matter was, and then Claud, who would already, no doubt (while Andy was engaged with John) have

found and purloined Andy's money, was to kill him and make good his escape, trusting to the resemblance between him and John to supply the opportunity for casting suspicion on his cousin. To assist this part of the scheme, it had been, no doubt, that Claud had bought a suit and cap which were almost duplicates of those which John wore.

John's thinking, as he had left Andy's shop, with the diploma under his arm, that he heard strange sounds in the interior of the shop, his then stopping, opening the door, listening, closing the door and going on again: these things had none of them been any part of Claud's plan. They had, however, accidental as they were, played into that plan precisely as if they had been arranged for. So had John's meeting with the realtors, his evident wish to get away from them, his entrance into the barber shop. There had also been an element of chance, no doubt, in the casual appearance of the plain-clothes policeman, just in front of Andy Polano's, at exactly the moment when John was leaving Andy's shop. Or *had* that possibly been a part of Claud's and George's plan? They *might* have known at least the approximate time when the plain-clothes man was due to make his appearance on Winter Hill.

At all events, John, confused in his mind though he was, also thoroughly amazed, disgusted, ashamed and fearfully downcast and discouraged, saw with

preternatural clearness the whole damning chain of events.

John could remember, in the long days and years that followed upon this hour, that, at this point in his reflections, Mr. Proteus took him into another room and there conversed with him. But just what the conference had been about he could not exactly remember. The only point from the whole long talk that remained with him was that he, John, should do no more talking to any one whatever, unless to him, Mr. Proteus. And John had promised.

There had been, too, at some time or other, a hearing before a grand jury. John could never get quite clear about the day when this had been held. His mind, in fact, appeared to become more blank each day. He had been present at that hearing—if a hearing had really been had, and it surely must—had heard each terrible bit of testimony. But what the testimony had been, he could never quite remember. He only recalled that, at no time in the proceedings, would Mr. Proteus let him say a word. Then he remembered, too, that he had recalled the feelings which he had previously experienced, in Granville, whenever he had heard of some person who, accused of crime, had refused to talk—"on attorney's advice"—lest the defense should give away its case too soon and be at a disadvantage on the main trial. He also remembered that, in those

days after the accusation in Duluth, he had felt about as he imagined a person might feel who had been struck on the head with a large-sized mallet, and yet had not been incapacitated for walking the streets. He was finally held for trial in the district court—and for murder.

CHAPTER XXVIII
DISTANT CONSEQUENCES

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Distant Consequences

AFTER the "true bill" had been found, he often forgot to eat, to sleep, to recognize any of his acquaintances.

And Jean! At some vague time—he never could be quite certain when—he met her suddenly in the street. It was at some moment between that fearful inquest and the still more fearful grand jury hearing. Of that he was always sufficiently sure.

John spoke to her with much cordiality, he afterwards thought, smiled a little, or tried to, lifted his hat, advanced toward her. She, however, met him with an unrecognizing stare, and simply passed on.

John too "passed on" then. It seemed that his soul had died within him. And how could any man's body keep living after his soul was dead? He had heard of such things, but had never understood them. Now he thought he understood.

Once again he met Jean—dear little Jean, whom, in his dreams, he had seen so many times and so often talked with that he appeared to have known her even from his earliest days! She, on that occasion, was riding with Claud in a new automobile. "Dead man's money," thought John. Then, "O

very well, Madam, if you want to ride in a car purchased and paid for with human blood, and to chat with a well known libertine while you do it, you and I shall have no quarrel on that account."

He thought, however, that he would try at least to secure her recognition, so he raised his hat. Claud spoke and smiled, but Jean, apparently, saw him not. He believed, too, that her face flushed. She did not wish to be spoken to by one accused of serious crime. That was the plain situation, John thought.

One day, after the preliminary trial, John met Claud. The meeting took place in Mr. Proteus' office. John had come up to confer with Mr. Proteus about his case—or had Mr. Proteus come to John's hotel? Probably not, for, had he done so, Claud would not have been present.

Jean was not present, at all events, on that encounter. Jean had never been present in Mr. Proteus' office so much as once, when John had been there, since John had been accused. John, at first, had thought that Jean might have left Mr. Proteus' service. But when he remembered, as he somehow seemed to do, that Jean now—in place of Miss Banyard—had become Mr. Proteus' confidential secretary, he felt very certain that Jean had neither left on her own account, nor (impossible!) have been discharged. Then it had occurred to him (and his

heart gave a leap of joy at the thought) that Jean had been so upset by his predicament, that she had not been able to come to the office. (In the theory that he was the real criminal she, of course, could never, by any possibility, for a single moment have believed.) Then, as already mentioned, he had seen her on the street. And had seen her once again.

And now, once more, after all that, John met Claud. At length, after these weary, crazing days, he stood in Mr. Proteus' silent forecourt, alone with Claud. Even Miss Banyard was in Mr. Proteus' private room with Mr. Proteus.

John, with a fearful desire for revenge which made his limbs like water beneath him, fastened his eyes on Claud and slowly walked toward him without a word.

Claud shrank, turned sidewise, retreated to an inner corner. He instinctively avoided the wall that was pierced with windows.

John followed.

Claud put an arm before his face, and gave a little shrill outcry.

At the moment Mr. Proteus' inner door opened, and out pranced Mr. Proteus. He was plainly headed for Jean's desk, wherein, no doubt, were important blanks or other stationery. Seeing the two young men, he stopped. John looked straight upon him, with, however, a hand oustretched toward

Claud. "That!" was all that John could say. He forever remembered that his voice was as hoarse as that of a wild beast.

Mr. Proteus came up to him, put one tender arm about him, led him away into his office. "Leave us," he said to Miss Banyard.

When the door had closed, he set John down in a chair. Then, with hands on hips, he looked down on him and spoke: "John, you're innocent."

"*You* don't believe in me, then?"

"You're not in condition, John, to understand the simplest utterances. I did not ask if you were innocent, I said that you were."

"O God, yes."

"Look here, my boy. You're going to go crazy, if you keep on at this rate. I've often told you that you were much too sensitive, altogether too thin-skinned for a world like this."

"Then I'd better get out of it."

Mr. Proteus took him by the shoulder and shook him hard. "Wake up. By the Almighty, do you know what I've done? I've moved the heavens and the earth, almost, to get you out on bail, you—in a case like this. I've moved heavens and earth. Not really a bailable case, this is. In my whole career as a lawyer, I've never attempted the absolutely impossible before, and yet achieved it. And here you are, speaking of suicide."

"What about Claud? Have you talked to him?"

"Yes."

"He's guilty. What did he say?"

"He proved an absolute alibi. He didn't merely allege it. He proved it. We know to the minute when the murder was committed, and he, he—"

"Was the man that did that murder."

Mr. Proteus walked to a window, looked out, and came back. In that short time he had decided not to tell John anything about the burglars who had entered Morning Glory Cottage, and nearly robbed Jean. To tell John this would simply have convinced him that Claud was the guilty man behind the attempted stealing, and then— Heaven only knew what foolish thing this half crazed man might do to Claud.

"You *may* be right. But, at all events, Claud was in a near-by billiard parlor, playing billiards (so they say) with a man named— I'll not give you his name. That man and others are all ready to testify that Claud was in that parlor (it was in the parlor of a man named Buckthorn Billy) playing billiards at the time when the murder was committed. I don't have too high a regard for the word of any of these people; but a jury—that's different. They would believe.

"And the clock in the billiard parlor, it's always accurate. Not been out of order in two years, so

says the proprietor. His word would go, too. In fact he's a little better type than the most of the people who frequent his parlor. Not a bad man at all is Buckthorn Billy.

"Meantime, I've got you out on bail. That's a miracle, because it doesn't seem, to me at least, to be a bailable case. But you're out."

"As to the *next* trial, Mr. Proteus. Have you any hope?"

"All will be done that can be done."

"Have they caught Red George?"

"No. Disappeared. Can't find hide or hair of him. My theory—at least to the court—is that George is the man that did that crime. It's a worthless theory, for George was never in Andy's shop on the day of the murder. But I bolstered my theory up until I created in the court's mind a little shade of doubt. That's how I managed— Well, I got you released on bail."

"My one good friend. But what about the final trial?"

"There won't *be* any final trial. I can keep this thing running on for years. Continuances. Appeals to upper court. My boy—I—if I had a son I—I—couldn't— I tell you, by the very throne of law and justice itself, that there will never be any conclusive trial—unless I am certain that, on that trial, I can secure your acquittal. Witnesses will die off, after a

time. Witnesses, too, will move away." He smiled. "Do you see? It shall *not* be. It shall not. I say, by the very shades of Blackstone and Kent, that it shall not."

John saw that his clear-headed, warm-hearted friend believed he was issuing encouragement. John had not the heart to tell him that merely to evade the law would never be any satisfaction to him, John Smith. Too thin-skinned? Yes, by the memory of his father and his mother, he was and would forever be "too thin-skinned;" for what, to the world, was only thinness of skin, to him, John Gridley Smith, was simply high ideals of honor. How much profit in merely evading the penitentiary, when, in the downright opinion of all the world, including the world he loved and walked among, he deserved not only to be in the penitentiary, but (though capital punishment had been abolished here now) to be even hanged? He wished he could show those stupid people who believed they had seen him issue from the back door of Andy Polano's, that they did not know the difference between himself and Claud, that their powers of observation were not worth a snap of the fingers. But for the faulty observation, he would not now be in this plight. O would, O would to God that he could show them.

But he could not show them. That was what constituted his whole sad predicament, the fact that he

could not show these stupid people (and, incidentally, court and jury) that their powers of observation were worthless.

One thing sure: he was greatly obliged to Mr. Proteus. Mr. Proteus was his friend: he knew that. Mr. Proteus believed in him: he knew that. Thank God for some things. He must also—it was only fitting and decent—make it perfectly clear to Mr. Proteus that he was grateful for this perfect friendship. Rising from the chair he held out his hand.

"You—you— You've been very good to me. I—I —appreciate— Thank you, thank you a great deal." He was glad, in after years, that he had said so much as even that. He might have forgotten! In his great confusion and excitement, he might have forgotten!

Mr. Proteus took his hand, held it for a moment, and tears came into his eyes. "John—I—I—always wished—I—had a son."

John, feeling deeply moved, went to the door and looked out. Had Claud been still in the waiting-room, John would surely have turned back, for he still could not have laid eyes on the fellow and not have told him precisely what he was. There would not have been another combat. John felt sure of that. Claud had had his lesson. But Mr. Proteus! He, John felt, would have been most deeply hurt had John given rein to his anger again without one single point to be secured by so doing.

CHAPTER XXIX
EYES THAT FOLLOW FADING SHIPS

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Eyes That Follow Fading Ships

JOHN returned to his hotel. It was broad daylight, but he got into bed. He had a feeling that he had not slept for several nights, but knew not exactly whether that impression was true.

He had hardly pulled the covers up about him, when the same cheerful traveling salesman (if traveling salesman he really were) of a few days since, began to sing again:

> "Said Jim to Jack, 'Now what'll you take?
> You seem to have come just off the Lake.' "

A little whistling, and then, in the shrill, higher tone:

> "Said Jack to Jim, 'Why, whisky's mine,
> Unless you got that Muscat wine
> That old Paul Bunyan used to make
> Whenever his friends come off the Lake.' "

A very few minutes, and then, in the deep voice once more:

> "Said Jim to Jack, 'Now what'll you take?
> You seem to have come just off the Lake.' "

Then, in a short while, the high voice. And so on.

John began to despise Duluth. It had seemed im-

possible that anyone should ever despise Duluth. Yet here he was despising—yes, actually hating—Duluth. He pulled himself together, fought against shame and doubt and detestation. But in vain. He had lost all clearness of ideas, all ability to plan. The strong inventive faculty, which, thus far, had marked his brief career, and which had, as he thought, resulted from an hereditary cheerful disposition and a wish to be of service to his fellow men—this power had utterly gone. There had left him the chief part of his soul. Rather, the soul was dead.

He stayed in his room, perhaps even in his bed, the whole of the next day and the next night. His self was disintegrating. He spent hours together in absolute torpor. Sometimes he dreamed a little. Now and then Paupukkeewis, as Miss Banyard had termed the softly whining voice of the Lake wind, came up to his window, and piped there dismally.

Some one knocked at his door. As he did not rise or answer, the door softly opened and a man entered the room—an officer. John at once showed violence. A pair of handcuffs clicked upon his wrists.

He dressed and was led away, heard his own trial, listened to the verdict, and went with his captor to "the big stone house." When the cell door had shut behind him, his heart contracted with sorrow and pain. There had been a tomb-like finality about

the clanging of that door. "For life!" He had been sent here for life. And even Mr. Proteus, it seemed, had not been able to give him hope of pardon. Pardon? Why pardon? If guilty, or even thought guilty—much the same thing—was it not far better to be immured, away off here, safe from curious, revolted, even pitying eyes?

The arrogant ego which sits enthroned in the center of each one of us, became filled with a fearful sense of outrage. "Put *me* in a cell!" it seemed to cry. "How dare they?"

He leaped to his feet, rushed to the door, began pounding with all his might against its bars, cried over and over: "Not guilty! Not guilty! Not guilty!"

But only awoke himself by so doing. Then found himself beating noisy fists against the door that separated his room from the drummer's.

"What the devil's the matter with you in there?" protested the drummer. "Want to beat my door down?"

"I want you to stop singing about people coming in off the Lake. You've sung it half a million times already. And people in other parts of this hotel want to go to sleep, too."

The mood of the drummer changed. "It's only seven g.m.," he soothed. "Take another little glass, my sweet child, and awaken next morning.

'Said Jim to Jack, "Now what'll you take?
You seem to have come just off the Lake."' "

John got back into bed, and the drummer actually became more quiet. Yet John seemed unable to sleep. Or, if he slept, he fell heavily out of one monstrous vision into another.

Once he awoke with the soul of the wildest kind of wild beast racing madly round and round within him.

Peace! He would have peace! He would have peace at any cost.

He would—yes, he would go to Scaligera. Scaligera, in her calm, self-controlled way, loved him, adored him, idolized him. He felt quite sure of that. She was a queer being, but her calmness and her self-control would be good for him now and forevermore. He ought to have married her, ages back.

He ought, furthermore, to have stood true to his father's ideal of scholarship for him. Where was all the grand learning which he had promised himself when, with youthful vanity and pride, he had hired a special train and rushed like a young madman into Granville—there to be met with a brass band and the sobriquet which had stuck to him ever since? Only an accident had turned the tables on his fellow students.

He shuddered at his youthful follies. Yet he knew that all young men, without exception, do absurd,

bizarre, outrageous things. And underneath that barbarous desire to cut a great, a needlessly expensive, figure before his fellow students in the University, there had lain a great ideal: an ideal of true scholarship, of deep and sound learning such as would have pleased his old, unlearned father to the very heart. And there had been an ideal of service too, not of mere acquisition.

And now! Ideals gone, all gone!

He arose in the morning, dressed, breakfasted. Then he changed his room for another. He did not want to hear that drummer again.

He went out on the street. Every person he looked at gave him a new and clammy feeling of fear, repulsion. His portrait, somehow, as he had heard from some one, had been got possession of and published in the newspapers. Every eye, he believed, knew about his wretchedness, his unspeakable ignominy. The sky, he managed to note, was gray, gray as his soul. Scattering drops of rain, from time to time, were falling. At the corner of each block the voice of Paupukkeewis was raging.

He secured copies both of Duluth and of other newspapers for the three or four days just past. These he took to his room in the Iron Range Hotel, and began to peruse. All the writers, he found, had been fair, even more than fair, to him. He remembered, dimly, that he had used to wonder why

newspapers had always seemed so extremely lenient toward those accused of crime. "It has been alleged, but not proven, that," etc. "It does not seem probable that any person who always, hitherto, has led a clean and decent life, would now, suddenly," etc. He had been quite bitter, in the old days, about these ultra-careful expressions. Now he prayed God to forgive him, if ever, in that period, he had done the slightest injustice to any innocent person.

A vivid flash of lightning filled the room. Came a peal of thunder which set all the furniture quivering.

Stepping to the window, he looked out. There was a steamer, "The Minneopa," just starting for the Lake. He could read the letters of her name upon the prow very easily by the queer yellow storm-light. He heard the voice of Paupukkeewis again. There came a clank, too, of something on the vessel's deck. A row of faces lining the uppermost rail was looking backward at Duluth. Another flash of lightning—terrific, appalling, illuminating sea and sky, and showing, far upon the horizon, a long, low wall of utter darkness.

The world near by grew dark. Vivid lights appeared on the ship. Somebody in a room to the right of John's—it seemed to be a woman—cried out shrilly against the recklessness of those who "go down to the sea in ships" when great tempests threaten.

"Safe enough now-a-days," boomed an answering man's voice, with stolid indifference.

John watched the ship as it steamed on in confident majesty through the Gate of the World. He wondered if that row of faces would ever gaze on Duluth again, ever gaze on any city.

Now the ship was fading in the distance. Though illumined again and again by flashes of the storm, she nevertheless became dimmer and dimmer, a mere gray blur in which human beings still lived, and, perchance, were praying for help.

The air about the ship grew black, swallowed the little gray blur into its blackness. The sea itself was wholly black. The world became a void of blackness.

John drew down his curtain, went and slouched into his rocking-chair. The storm still raged and with growing force. It increased, in fact, the whole day through. Yet John did not arise: there was an even greater tempest in his soul. Revenge, lust, avarice, hatred—hatred of Claud, hatred of all society, hatred—almost—of Jean her very sweet self: these were the elemental forces that roared within him. By dawn the outward storm appeared to have passed.

John descended to the dining-room, ate sparingly, looked at a newspaper. There were just a few words, in this particular edition at least, about the Polano case. The great tempest was now the center of news

interest. John, at length, having culled the most of the news about himself—and most of it *was* news—turned to the largest headline of the first page. "Minneopa probably lost with all on board." A smaller line announced, "Sixty-eight lives lost." What a world! What a world! Well, it was not a ship of his own at all events; neither had man nor woman nor child been on board that had cared for him, or that had concerned him in any way.

All at once he noticed, in the list of those thought dead, the name of Redfield George, alias "Red George." Mr. George had been trailed by detectives (asserted the newspapers) ever since the Polano murder, for with this he had had very much more to do, probably, than appeared upon the surface. But now both Mr. George (who had embarked, it seemed, under the name of William Green) and the detectives who had been following him, had, it appeared, perished in the storm on the Lake.

CHAPTER XXX
AN ABSENTEE DUKE

CHAPTER XXX

An Absentee Duke

JOHN went out into the gray, dead day. The storm was, plainly enough, a thing of the past, yet all nature appeared to be in deep mourning. As for himself: the only man that might ever have explained the Polano case (useless to expect that Claud would do that) would now be speechless on earth forevermore.

He started for Mr. Proteus' office, then returned to the hotel, and phoned instead. He could not bear to look on Jean again, Jean the—the treacherous.

Mr. Proteus answered the phone. No, he had heard nothing further. Yes; George, no doubt, had been drowned. John wanted the plain truth now. Was there any hope at all for him, John, the slightest bit of hope? Mr. Proteus answered calmly, No, there was not, so far as he could see, the slightest bit of hope. Nevertheless, that was not any reason why we should wholly despair. "I've had hopeless cases before," he declared. "There is always a way, if only a person can think of it. I will keep on thinking. By the bye, John, I believe you'd better come up to the office, some time today. I want to talk with you. You need cheering. Come."

John thanked him cordially, promised to call, and hung up.

He walked about the city till late in the afternoon —pondering, pondering. At length he decided that there was no good reason why he should go to Mr. Proteus' office. "'No hope,' yet I 'need cheering.' He can't cheer me much with 'no hope.' Besides, I don't want to see Jean again."

There was in the back of his brain a strange, bewildered sense. He had never had anything quite like it before.

He went and got a railway ticket. Then he began to want to go up on the bluff again. Jean would have got home a long time before, so that he would be in no danger of meeting her. And, should she chance to see him from her house, she would probably not come out. Besides, he would keep well away from Morning Glory Cottage.

As he mounted the crest, the sun was sinking, and again the shadow of the bluff reached out, gathered in the entire city, slipped across the Lake, engulfed the long line of Wisconsin shore. So it should be some time, as Mother Margaret had expressed it, with the whole material universe. The stars shone out; a white mist began to arise from the Lake; crickets, near at hand, began to chirp under the trees. Church bells, down in the lower city, began to ring, challenging the cool indifference of the distant stars.

A big liner left a near-by dock, and began moving outward through the Gate of the World. "Lo! Lo-o-o! Lo what I bring you, spite of danger, World!" But John heard little of the sound. His heart was full of revenge. He believed there was only one thing left to him now: a duty, a solemn, almost a religious duty, to revenge himself on Claud. Suppose John should ever be permitted by fate to prove his own innocence; that would not mean, of necessity, that Claud would ever be punished for the crime—either the crime of killing Andy or that of intentionally incriminating John. Suppose that Claud should be arrested, convicted: what then? A year or two in prison, perhaps, with orchestras, humorous lectures, motion pictures, and so on. Then—liberty. With all his relatives' influence, he was nearly certain to be pardoned soon. To a man like John the mere suspicion that he had committed a foul deed was worse than prison, worse almost than death. To a pachyderm like Claud, prison itself was nothing, provided only that the confinement was not too long continued, also that a goodly supply of cash, on his exit from the prison, was yet again to be come by in the very easiest way.

Then the church bells sounded again. How his mother had loved the bells! John listened for a very long time, thinking of his mother, of his father, and of all that these had meant for him to do and to

become. The tears rushed into his eyes. He recalled a passage of Scripture, "Vengeance is mine, *I* will repay, saith the Lord."

He had had his right hand in his pocket, on his knife, alternately half opening and fully closing the largest blade. He took his hand out of his pocket, drew a long sigh, buttoned his coat (for the night was growing chill) and descended again the Golden Stair.

He went to the "Soo" depot, exchanged his ticket for another. Returned to his hotel, began packing his suitcase.

The drummer, it seemed, had changed *his* room, as well as John his. At all events, next door, the drummer was still cheerful and still singing:

> "Said Jim to Jack, 'Now what'll you take?
> You seem to have come just off the Lake.' "

But Red George would never "come off the Lake." Fate was against John Smith, John thought, to the bitter end.

The drummer started up the second division of his song:

> "Said Jack to Jim—"

But John rushed to the drummer's door, beat upon it with both fists. "You've sung that song about a million times, and I'm tired of it. I've told you already."

"Like something else, hey?" inquired the drummer, not discouraged. "All right, my child."

After a little preliminary humming, to get the pitch, he sang, very slowly and impressively:

"In days of old, with hearts of gold,
True white men sailed this unknown way.
Greysolon,[1] one, went off alone,
In the wild forest knew no stay,
Nor fear of snow or savage foe,
Till back he'd brought the one[2] he'd sought.
And all were of that steadfast band
Where now our noble cities stand—"

He hummed again, then triumphantly rolled out the refrain:

"Duluth and Superior!
Duluth and Superior!
Where the sail meets the rail
And the rail meets the sail
All hail! ALL hail!
Duluth-Superior!"

The last line of the refrain died down to a soft, low murmur, with all the unconscious pathos of a sound that is passing into silence eternally. John's heart was terribly torn. He had so loved Duluth, so had dreamed that, when the right time had come, he

[1] Daniel Greysolon, Sieur Duluth.

[2] Father Hennepin. There are various versions of the story.

would make this beautiful city his residence, his home, that now—when all of the place was slipping away from him— He was glad the drummer had stopped singing.

But the drummer had not stopped. He went on again, after a little pause:

"May we that view this magic age
Be worthy of that pioneer past—
Be true and helpful to the last,
Clear-headed, warm of heart, and sage,
And, shaping out of rock and steel
The dreams that they could only feel,
Remember them, the little band
Who fought and built where now do stand—"

As the drummer passed a second time into the refrain, John began slamming his things into the satchel with loud, diversive, even explosive, effects. But, as the singer began what was plainly the final stanza of his song, John, perforce, stood and listened. Like the wedding guest in the old "Rime," "he could not choose but hear."

"Dim in the future we behold
Far mightier cities here to be:
Still linking, each, the East and the sea
And the rest of earth to our wheatfields' gold
Our bags and bales, our beams and bars.
May we dedicate all, then, to the stripes and the stars,

And the loved world too! O the righteous band
Who fought and built where now there stand—"

Ere the last words had fully died away—"Duluth-Superior"—he slipped out of his door, closing it gently behind him.

He went below, paid his bill, carried his satchel to the depot. A few minutes later, while Duluth was slipping away from him (and, as he fancied, already far into the past) he closed his eyes. And he exclaimed inwardly, spite of the drummer's song: "Duluth! Would to God I could blot from my memory the very word, Duluth!" As for the sister city of Superior, he had taken a strong dislike to her too. Twice, between the coroner's inquest and the hearing before the grand jury, he had phoned to Mr. Jim Smith, of Superior, but, each time, had been informed that Mr. Smith had been called to Europe on important business, and was "probably on the ocean now." Jim was a kind of European drummer for some manufactory in Duluth. "Jim could not have done anything about these terrible matters anyway," John reflected. He felt a kind of dull hatred for everybody.

Then he began to think that he heard a voice, Jean's voice, crying out after him: "John! John! John!" He scoffed inwardly at the idea. But Jean, in fact, at the very time, was on her knees, attempting to pray, but calling feebly instead, and with arms

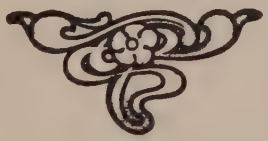
outstretched: "John! John! John!" She had had a presentiment that John would at some time go away, and that she would never see him any more. She feared that he might even destroy himself. That would be the quite natural result of so supersensitive a nature as his, bowed down and intolerably overburdened with human hate, human cunning, human injustice, human incapacity to right wrong. Then, at last, she did succeed in praying. "O, dear God! Let him not destroy himself! And wherever he may be, give him some fine, supporting friendship—some little, little—at *least* a little help. O dear God!"

She rose from her knees, went to the phone, called for John at his hotel. But only to be informed that, a short time before, he had left the city.

When John arrived at St. Paul, he got out of his train, and, without troubling himself to eat, took a train for the South. This was shortly after midnight.

In the morning he alighted in his native town. Only a short time spent at breakfast, he walked to the little Rose Hill Cemetery, in the outskirts of the village, and sought out there his father's and mother's graves.

BOOK IV
TOO GREAT SHAME



CHAPTER XXXI
PREPARATIONS FOR A LONG JOURNEY

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Preparations for a Long Journey

PERCHED on the crest of his mother's earth heap, he found a pair of robins, which, even at his silent and gradual approach, took wing into the nearest yew. It gave him a little stab of almost jealous pain to find these birds at natural guard, out here, alone, over the only dust, living or dead, in all this world, that was dear to him. Then he thought of the birds as the spirits of his father and mother, spirits which had been at happy play until he, unthoughtedly, had disturbed them. They had not recognized him! Perhaps there would not even be any recognition "over yonder." Perhaps there would not even be any "over yonder."

He had come intending to pray above the grave of each of his parents, but, for some reason, his heart now filled not with love and worship, but with pain and wrathful rebellion. "You've killed her, God," he cried. "You've killed her and him too. You killed them both before they could see me become what they wanted me to be. You've killed the only people in all this world that ever cared for me, and you've left me all alone. And men like Claud Tyrone you allow to live on and to prosper. I see no right or

justice in it. There *isn't* any right. There *isn't* any justice. And now, before I set out on the endless journey, I'm going to take an oath to follow my own will, my own pleasure, in everything. Never a thought for others will I take, only for myself. Why should I, any further, struggle or strive? My will, then, God, not thine! It cannot be any worse, any more unjust, than thine is, God. And, since thou dost not take any thought for thine own children, even the most just of them (or, rather, the more just the less care dost thou have of them) then neither will I, but I will love and serve myself alone."

With a last look at the robins and a kiss over the name on each of the stones, he went away.

Arrived in Granville, he went to his bank there, and was, for some minutes, closeted with Mr. Von Bulow. Yes, Mr. Von Bulow would take full charge. Yes, Mr. Von Bulow would be glad to see that John's wishes were fully carried out. Whenever he heard from John at any place whatsoever, he would send the money at once and never reveal to a living soul the place whence John had written.

John bade him good-bye. Then he went and wrote a large check and sent it to Mr. Proteus, thanking Mr. Proteus in the accompanying note for all the trouble which he had been to on John's account, and stating that he thought the check would cover both Mr. Proteus' fee and the losses of John's bonds-

men. He also wrote a letter to Jean, which he meant to mail later. He remained a few more days in Granville, in order to sell his laundry. The proceeds he placed to his own credit in Mr. Von Bulow's bank. Then he went to the nearest depot, took the first train. He had no baggage, other than the rubbers on his feet (for it had been raining) and a pair of gloves, much too heavy for the time of year. His head swam terribly.

CHAPTER XXXII
ALL FOR MY BELOVED

CHAPTER XXXII

All for My Beloved

ONE day, before John had so suddenly left Duluth, Jean had been walking along crowded West Superior Street. The charge of crime against John had completely unnerved her. Coming, as it had, on the heels of what had been, thus far, the happiest day of her life, it had wrapped her soul about with a mantle of anguish and fear. Mr. Proteus was no doubt a great man in his profession, and yet, from remarks which, in spite of himself, that astute gentleman had chanced to let fall, she saw only too clearly that John's case was hopeless. Innocent though John was, the penitentiary yawned for him. There existed not the slightest chance of acquittal. He would have to be immured. And, to a man of John's fineness and sensitiveness, she understood but too plainly that merely the name of having been convicted of a heinous crime would be something worse than death.

All at once she believed she had passed John, there on the street, without having spoken to him. She turned and looked back. He was nowhere to be seen. She felt very sure that, had he been in the crowd, she would have been able to pick him out,

although his back should have been toward her. She did not know that John, almost in the very moment when she had passed him, had turned into a doorway, in order to conceal there his deep chagrin.

Jean had just been sent on an errand by Mr. Proteus. When she returned to his office, Mr. Proteus called her into his private room. Then he said, "Jean, my girl, I know how it is between you and John. And I am glad that it is as it is. But, just now, let us devote our energies to clearing this innocent man. Should you at once marry him, and then should he go to the penitentiary—"

Jean turned aside with a wild wail, and, her face in her hands, heavily sobbed.

"Your pardon, Jean," begged Mr. Proteus. "I was brutal to speak so bluntly. And still, what *should* I have done? You and John must not marry—yet. It would be sheer folly. Let the matter rest for a time, and let us devote ourselves for the present to one thing only—serving John."

Jean slowly dried her eyes, and looked at him with a smile. There was, then, some hope.

"To do this—er—it will probably be necessary for us—for you in particular—to—er—to dissemble—er—a little."

"Dissemble?"

"Er—yes. You see, there are just two possible ways in which—*my* opinion—to catch the actual

villains in this case. One way is to watch Claud Tyrone. The other is to watch Red George."

"I see," said Jean.

"Now, to catch either of these men, Claud must be kept in Duluth. That is—er—it is very much better to keep him in Duluth. For one thing, should he get outside the jurisdiction, he might, should he become suspicious, disappear entirely."

Jean was round eyes. "I see."

"For another thing, if the man remains in Duluth, he is almost certain, at some time, to get into communication with his accomplice or accomplices. If he does, there may be other things doing. People who do one foul crime are likely to do others.

"Here in Duluth we may both prevent those other crimes and also get sufficient evidence out of one or another of the criminals to convict them of the murder—or at least to secure the acquittal of John."

"Claud, then, you believe to be guilty?"

"Of his guilt I have no doubt. But he's a sly rogue, cunning almost beyond belief. We may never be able to trip him up, even should he stay here."

"And how can I help?"

"By no longer declining his attentions."

A deathly silence followed. Then Jean shuddered. She looked up only to find Mr. Proteus' cold eyes fixed upon her intently. He said with some bitterness, "I thought you *loved* John."

The blood rushed from her heart to her face in a mighty flood. Her head turned aside of itself. Yet she said (and it was the very first time she had admitted the truth to anyone): "Yes, I do love John. Very, very dearly do I love him." Little had she thought to make the one confession of her life to any other than John himself.

"If, then, you really love John, and do not merely half love him, you will do what I say."

Jean again shuddered. She put a cold hand up to each hot cheek. Then, at last: "Do you think it absolutely necessary in order to save John?"

"It is positively John's only chance."

Jean reached out a hand to Mr. Proteus. "I would go to Tartarus for John," she said.

Mr. Proteus bowed a little over the hand with an old-fashioned courtesy which did not sit ill upon him. "I need not tell you anything further," said he.

So dismissed, Jean returned to her desk in the waiting-room, and, when Claud next came in—which was five or six days later—she received him almost cordially.

Struck by the change, he beamed and talked, and talked and beamed again. When twelve o'clock arrived, he insisted: "Come out and take luncheon with me."

"I'll ask Mr. Proteus," said Jean, feigning hesitation.

"Not *that* old sucker."

"He's a kind of guardian of mine," explained Jean, rather kindly. "He and my father were very fond of each other, and, since Father was drowned in the Lake—"

"I know all that story!" cried Claud. "Up from the work and on with the duds, my child. The birds call—the roast pigeons. On with the duds, and come with me."

Jean went.

But, riding with Claud in his new automobile, whom should she see before she had gone one block, but John—poor dejected, utterly downcast John? Her heart leaped to her throat. Then she thought she should surely die of shame. For one thing, she suddenly remembered the locket, and the picture of Claud which, by a most unlucky accident, had been disclosed to John therein. Now—poor John! He would see in her present apparent comradeship with Claud, a complete confirmation of all his worst former fears. The only retreat she could think of making was that behind her own dignity. She would look as dignified, as totally uninterested, by Claud, as she possibly could. So she assumed, poor innocent actress, as fine an expression of absolute boredom and complete joylessness as she knew how to take on. And, surely, it was not so very hard for Jean, in that moment, to look utterly cheerless and unallured.

But John, how had he taken it? Then she wondered just when John had got by. She believed, but was not certain, that John had seen her laughing and chattering with Claud, before she had discovered John's approach. If so, and John had then noticed the change in her features and conduct which had come about only when she had cast her eyes on him, then he, poor fellow, could only attribute the sudden chilling of her manner to a heartfelt disapproval, a terrible condemnation rather, of what he must have thought she considered his crime, his foul and inexcusable murder. Her soul contracted with the keen pain of the thought.

Then, of a sudden, she came to a decision. Mr. Proteus or no Mr. Proteus, she would write to John. She would tell him everything. She would leave Claud at once and go back to the office, write that note and send it off to John by special messenger. But when she thought of Mr. Proteus' countenance when that iron-willed gentleman should learn that she had, at her very first chance, abandoned Claud, she decided that she would at least remain with Claud till after luncheon, and that she then would return to the office, and, come weal come woe from it, write John a note. She need not, in that note, make any unmaidenly confession of affection, but she certainly would let John know that she liked him, and still believed in him, also that her riding with

Claud Tyrone had only been done at the suggestion of Mr. Proteus and for the sole and single purpose of winning, if possible, John's case.

But when she had got back to the office, and had there written John not a note but a long letter of detailed explanation, then it seemed to her that, if she mailed that letter without first submitting it to her benefactor's eyes, she would thereby, at least in some measure, be playing the traitor to Mr. Proteus. And Mr. Proteus, if he afterward found this matter out himself, would never trust her again.

She ended by showing the letter to Mr. Proteus. Mr. Proteus read it, just as he might have perused a bill of lading. When he had finished, he handed the letter back to her. "Mail it if you wish," said he. "But, in my judgment, it's a bad thing to do."

Jean hated to persist with Mr. Proteus. Yet her heart was sore troubled, more perhaps than even the astute old lawyer could understand. So she ventured to ask why she should not mail the letter.

"Because it would bring John here at once, precipitate an engagement, possibly a marriage. The first would be bad enough." He turned to a sheaf of papers.

Jean, before his very eye, cast the letter into the waste basket. She did not first tear it, or even crumple it, lest by so doing, she should seem to be exhibiting anger.

She left the office, however, went solemnly up the bluff to Morning Glory Cottage, and retired to her little room up-stairs. There she tried to pray. But all that she could do, for long, long hours, was to call, in a feeble whisper, with her arms outstretched: "John! John! John!" At last she did succeed in praying. And then, when she had arisen from her knees, and phoned to John's hotel, it was only to learn, as we have seen already, that John had departed from Duluth. With a wild cry, she hung the receiver up; then ran down to the arms of Mother Margaret.

" 'Twas I that made him leave us." So she accused herself moaningly, again and yet again, while her poor mother, patting her shoulder, as if she had just become a little Jean once more, crooned: "There, there, honey! There, Jeany dear!"

And Jean, after a time, pretended to have been consoled. "It will come all right, Mother dear," she admitted. "I did very wrong to doubt."

When Jean, leaving the lawyer's office, had closed the door behind her, Mr. Proteus stepped to the basket, took the letter out and filed it away carefully with his will in the big iron safe. "Everything's evidence," he muttered. As he closed the safe-door, he added: "Just as soon as you're acquitted, John, you shall have that letter. You wouldn't take a million dollars for it."

But Jean kept the word she had given to Mr. Pro-

teus. If Mr. Proteus thought it better for John's case that she should not write to him so much as once, then, in the name of sense, if not of sentiment, she would surely refrain from writing.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE CALL TO FORGETFULNESS

CHAPTER XXXIII

The Call to Forgetfulness

JOHN still rode along on the train out of Granville, through a country he did not know. Once again he listened to the song of the wheels: "Bookety-book-book! Bookety-book-book!" And he recalled with a pang the day he had ridden on his special out of Chicago and into Granville. How high his hopes had soared that day! And now—his brain began to fill his whole skull like a ball of expanding hot lead.

A few seats before him, an active, tall old man, with a florid complexion, white chin whiskers and bright blue eyes, whom John took to be a duplicate of Uncle Sam, was loudly expatiating to a man who sat facing him—with, therefore, his back toward John. As the keen old fellow kept running on, he began to speak louder and to gesticulate with both hands. Presently the train ran onto a long bridge and its own particular contribution to the general uproar became less noticeable. Then an occasional phrase from Uncle Sam's mouth floated back intelligibly to John: "finest in the world"—"best in the world"—"biggest in the world"—"bigger and finer and wider and longer and very much better

too." The train struck solid ground again, and, as it quickened its pace, seemed to John to lift a crescendo of vocal indignation at the over-confident Uncle Samuel. But the old man strengthened *his* voice: "bigger and better"—"stronger and finer"—and so on. John began to hate the man intensely. He had been too much like this man himself.

Presently the whistle screamed. John closed his eyes and tried to think about nothing. At length he became half aware that the train had slowly groaned to a full stop. He opened his eyes again. The brakeman, as he somehow managed to observe, was helping down to the platform a trim little figure of a girl dressed in gray, while the baggageman piled four or five large trunks on a truck.

The conductor came rushing down the aisle of the car. Seeing John, he touched his shoulder. "Hobton! Hobton!"

"What do I know about Hobton?" queried John stupidly.

"This where you paid to." The conductor passed on indifferently.

Then John remembered that he had merely laid down a bill before a ticket agent in Granville, and asked for a ticket as far as "that" would take him. He had not even read the ticket or in any way noted his destination. What kind of place was Hobton?

He looked out at the station—a mere platform and

a red shed. Over the door of the shed was a board, bearing the one drear word, "Hobton." He looked out over the town itself. Perhaps six hundred inhabitants.

He slowly rose. Might as well get off here as anywhere. Looked about for his baggage. Was surprised to remember that he had none, except the rubbers on his feet and the gloves in his pocket. He suddenly swept swiftly down the aisle and leaped off the moving train. The conductor glared after him with scornful eyes.

"Hotel? Hotel, sir?" John waved the two clamorous runners aside, looked longingly after the diminishing square end of the train. Then he cast his gaze far out at right angles to the railroad, glimpsed beautiful green hills lying against a fleecy blue, an almost beckoning blue. Here and there, between him and the hills, stood a little white house, a big red barn. A bright yellow road wound round and round among these structures of men, reaching at length the hills, reaching at longer length the very sky itself—seeming almost to leave the hills, there at the sky line, and to wind up into that sky, there among those sailing clouds, sailing and sailing!

Would that a person might walk up into those clouds and sail forever and forever.

John Smith, of no fixed abode, pulled his cap firmly down on his head, if a little to one side, stepped

down to the end of the station platform, descended a short flight of steps, went a few paces farther, along a cinder path, to the point where it crossed the country road.

Then he turned off into the road, the road that led up into the sky.

He believed that he understood now how tramps feel, those ragged beings so thoroughly rejected of men. These poor fellows were not criminals, contrary to what most unthoughted people believed. They were not anti-social at all, merely extra-social. Not opposed to society, simply outside it, lookers on. He remembered, suddenly, the dictum of that Irish policeman back in Granville, the bluff old fellow who had been the cause of most of John's business success: "Half the tramps an' hoboes ain't payple wid calloused sinsibilities as most payple belave. They're payple wid *too great* sinsibilities, an' so they go traipsin' off an' traipsin' off—tryin' to escape the ruder contacts wid de world." John believed the man was right. Tramps were men who were trying to forget. That was all, trying to forget.

As he thought of forgetting, he chanced to remember a duty unattended to. He reversed his steps, went back into the little town, sought out among a number of "hotels" the post office, and mailed the letter he had written to Jean. The office was in one end of a grocery store, and, as he started

to go out of the building, he glimpsed a good sized cheese. He bought a quarter's worth of cheese and crackers, put the simple lunch in his pocket, and fared forth down to the country road again—the road that led on and on, up into the hills and far away, up into the green hills of forgetfulness among the high clouds of heaven. He buttoned his coat, drew a long sigh, partly of relief and partly of bitterness, and crossed the railroad track again.

As he began the long and weary task of setting one foot before another, he remembered the old policeman's addition to his dictum about tramps. When he had said, "traipsin' off, an' traipsin' off—tryin' to escape the ruder contacts wid de world," he had added: "an' *gettin' 'em instead.* HEAR? Gettin' 'em instead." John remembered the words with great distinctness. He also recalled that ignorant people have an old saying, namely: That it is bad luck to go back. Why had he gone back into Hobton? How easily traceable he would be now, should any one wish to trace him! His letter to Jean would be plainly postmarked "Hobton." Inquiry there would reveal the fact that a man of such and such a description had mailed that letter: for country postmasters remember everything. And then, as if to impress deeply his personality on the postmaster, John had stopped and purchased cheese and crackers of him, had even asked him questions about the

village. Confound his fool penchant for cross-examining everybody.

Then he consoled himself with the fact that his trial was not to occur for months yet to come, that neither Mr. Proteus nor the bondsmen would probably worry very much about him until just before the next term of court, and that, meantime, his Gracious Majesty, the Duke of Duluth, would have used his feet, if not his head, to very great advantage. He would also have grown a thick beard.

Nevertheless, he stopped more than once, and looked back at the railroad track, wondering if he ought not really, under all the circumstances, to return to the station, take a train to a somewhat larger town, and then at that less conspicuous point, where people would not be quite so likely to remember strangers and the ways they had taken out of town, to break forever his connection with his past. But at length he concluded again that, his bondsmen being in no danger of loss, he would probably not be looked after or up for the present. And so he plodded along.

When he had got beyond a high hill, he walked very fast for several miles. Then he ventured to stop, and sat down to rest upon the border of a little wood.

Alone! How good to be alone! Not an appointment for the afternoon, for many afternoons.

Solitary and still, solitary and still. Then his disordered imagination suddenly represented to him a crowd of persons stealing towards him beneath the cover of the wood, lurking in every ditch, peeping from the trunk of every rustling tree. What noise was *that*?

He arose and entered the wood, scoured it thoroughly, knowing all the while that he did a foolish and unnecessary thing, yet, somehow, unable to control his fears. He thought he caught a voice saying, "A fugitive from *in*justice!" and whirled with his hands clenched. No one there.

Then he heard—he was very sure that he heard—approaching steps.

"Who's there?" He had not been able to control his voice.

The steps kept approaching—nearer, nearer. He stood in an attitude of fierce resistance. Of a sudden the newcomer was revealed—a big collie dog. She stood for a moment quite as surprised as John himself. Then she slowly came up, and John saw that she was one of those neighborhood pets that are everybody's friends. She came very close before him, and slowly lay down.

John stroked the cool black muzzle. The tail flapped the ground hard. The large, liquid brown eyes gazed up gratefully into his. "Christ!" he cried, with sudden pain, "O Christ! If only thy

children had in their souls that universal love of mankind which lives in the heart of a good dog."

And he rose and strode back swiftly roadwards.

The dog followed him with a little yelp of joy. Turning, John motioned her to go back. She dropped, moved her head to one side, as if she could not bear to look at him straight. He was pierced by the expression. He called out, in spite of the fact that he did not wish her to join him on his walk: "Good doggie!"

She leaped forward with a shrill cry of love, brushed him as she flew past him, and then set off townwards at a furious pace. John reached the road and turned in the opposite direction. On to the distant hills! Back came the dog, brushed him again as she flew by, and, before he could command her to return home, was off on the high hill before him, exhibiting her speed. How she curvetted, ran in circles, made hoops of herself, and yelped her overexuberant friendship! An old Greek word came back to John from his college days—*a-gáh-pe*. He thought the dog was shouting over and over again that old and yet ever strange word—*a-gáh-pe* (love). "Faith, hope and *a-gáh-pe*. And the greatest of these is *a-gáh-pe*."

He called to the dog in return, "*A-gáh-pe*! *A-gáh-pe*!"

"*A-gáh-pe*!" she seemed shouting back.

Then he remembered that he must not begin his new career, howsoever buried in obscurity it must be, by stealing some one's dog. He cried to her, "Go back home, A-gáh-pe! Go back home."

She paid no attention, but ran on up the next hill before him, turned back grinning, eyes a-gleam and body quivering with the joy of a newly found friendship—a divine, a dog-like *a-gáh-pe*. "*A-gáh-pe*! *A-gáh-pe*!" she kept crying.

John tried to come up with her, but she saw his ulterior purpose too well, and, like a woman who does not wish her lover to break the word which has bound them sweetly together, pretended, for just so long as possible, that she did not understand.

Then John hardened his aching heart, and did the cruel, if inevitable, thing. He picked up a stick, and, when A-gáh-pe turned round, shouting and wriggling, he pointed back into the wood and shook the stick at her, at the same time stamping his foot. She came back then towards John, very slowly indeed, head down, tail down, every single loving hair of her big brown body down, until she was directly before him. Then she dropped in the road, laid her chin in the thick dust, and looked up at him with softly beseeching eyes. "My friend and my god!" So she seemed to say to him.

John was obdurate. He struck the stick on the road, and very close beside her head. She closed her

eyes, but did not flinch. "Go home," said John, huskily. "Go home." She remained motionless. She would have left him if she could; she desired to obey. John understood her: she *could* not stir. He marched on.

A series of hills stood before him, each successive summit overtopping the nearer. When he had reached the first top, he turned and looked back at A-gáh-pe. She had not moved: her tail was still toward him. He descended the hill on its farther side, and mounted the next summit. He looked back. There still lay A-gáh-pe, just as before.

And so to the next hill-top. And there she still was. She had not moved a particle.

John groaned. "God grant me, before I die," he ejaculated, "some one human being's love as sincere, as unchanging, as that of this dog, which I never have seen until now!"

A wagon and team appeared on the other side of A-gáh-pe. John waited to see what would happen. The man that drove the wagon pulled his team up suddenly just as he reached the dog. He had evidently expected her to get out of the way. As, however, she did not move, he kindly drove round her, and back into the road again.

And still A-gáh-pe did not stir.

The road dipped a little after this, and John never saw A-gáh-pe again.

There was life in the fields on every hand. Men rode their cultivators down the rows of glistening corn. Others drove humming mowers into the ranks of ripe grasses. One man stood at the bars by the side of the road, overlooking a field of winter wheat, now rapidly maturing in the hot sun.

As John approached, the man turned and addressed him. "Lookin' for job?"

John was pleased that the man had taken him for a laborer. And, after all, thought John, why not? His clothes had not been pressed for days; they were covered with dust, and he had not been shaved for a week or more. He reflected, and spoke very slowly, as if he might in fact be looking for a job: "Going to cut—that there—wheat—soon?"

"Yep—day after tomorrow. Four a day if you'll help us cut it."

John shook his head slowly, and passed on.

The man called after him, "Board an' lodgin' included."

John kept walking.

"Sarah 'll be mighty sad you didn't come."

John kept walking.

"Sarah's my daughter, not my wife."

John looked back, grinning. "Tell Sally I had another engagement," he bawled.

"You don't *want* to work, contaminate your blasted skin," shouted the farmer.

John made a megaphone with his hands, and raised it to his mouth. "You bet I don't," he shouted.

"Starve!" cried the farmer.

And John passed on. And on and on and on and on, without realizing the flight of time or the great distance he was covering. At all events he was not within walls. Neither was he where discerning eyes could see him

The shadows of the hills grew longer. He sat down in a pleasant place to rest. It was in a dark corner between a tree and a fence. Some one had nailed a little board there, across the gap between the fence and the tree, and John noticed with a pang that it was wide enough for two. *Some* country Sally, no doubt, was accustomed to sit here, with Joshua or Henry or James.

He himself sat down. There was a pleasant smell of dandelion all about. He glanced round. Why there *were* dandelions, everywhere—all over the countryside—in the green between the roadway and fences, and then, on the opposite side of the fences, in the great waving meadows.

"You too," he cried, "dear little dandelions! you, too, are hoboes. You travel across the continent each year, from south to north, and never pay a cent of fare to anybody. You crawl into the hay, and, when it is cut and baled and shipped, along with it

you go. And when the bales are opened, you drop out, wheresoever you may be, blow round in the winds, and fall to the ground—to come up later, laughing and nodding in every breeze.

"You care little where your homes are—out in the sunshine or the starlight, on barren hillsides, by lonely roads, in little fence corners—"

Two men were coming along the roadway, talking and laughing. When they caught sight of John they stopped, gazed on him with eyes of glad astonishment. "Lookin' fer work?" "No," said John, sullenly.

They stood for a moment, as if wanting to say more. Then they went on, mumbling, and John could catch the one word "hobo," several times repeated.

"Let them think me a hobo," he mumbled. "So long as the smell of the evening grass and the—"

All at once he smelt cheese in his pocket. He took out the little lunch he had bought in the forenoon, back at Hobton, and devoured it greedily. He had not, in fact, thought of that lunch from the time he had bought it until now.

He began to look for a place in which to sleep. The grass where he sat looked very inviting, but he thought of thieves, and, as he did not want to work and would not borrow or beg or steal, he must be sure to keep what money he had—at least until he

had reached some fairly large city. There he could write to Mr. Von Bulow and replenish his store, but, in a country village, to mail a letter and then in addition to wait and receive one would be to establish by far too easy a means of tracing him up. No, he must keep his money until, after months, he should so have changed his personal appearance that he could enter the larger cities and not be recognized by the police—who, of course, would probably have had good pictures of him sent out by the authorities in Duluth. Also, it looked like rain and John's every fibre craved a soft, dry bed.

Barns! He remembered barns and the fact that tramps slept in them. Of course it would not do to attempt to get into a barn so early in the evening as this, but just a little later, when farmers had gone to bed and to sleep— He laid his head back on the fence, and, a moment afterward, awoke with a start.

The moon was shining and smiling in the heavens. After recalling where he was, he started walking again, and in the course of a quarter of a mile, sighted a big, unpainted barn.

He went up to the part of the fence that was nearest to the barn, and merely sat down by it, listening. He would sit like this, he decided, for about half an hour, and if, in that time, he heard nobody stirring, he would quietly enter the barn.

When two or three minutes had elapsed, he was

so sleepy and tired that he decided to waste no more minutes listening, but to go into the barn at once.

This he did, without so much as alarming the watch-dog—if any there were—and, closing the barn door after him, made direct for the narrow stairway which he had glimpsed before he closed the door.

Up in the loft he had no difficulty in orientating himself. The loft door was open and a silvery flood of moonlight poured into the place. He climbed up over the highest pile of hay, and, descending on the other side, wiggled and burrowed a passage into the fragrant bedding. His head being somewhat low, he gathered a quantity of hay together, spread his handkerchief over it, laid his cap on that, and his head on the cap.

A rising wind filled the night with lullabies. He fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXXIV
STILL ON THE NOWHERE ROAD

CHAPTER XXXIV

Still on the Nowhere Road

FROM one drear dream he fell into another, and then into another and another, and always with some vague object unattained which ran indistinctly through them all. At last he dreamed of Duluth. He went up on the bluff again, he thought, to Inspiration Point. And now it seemed that, somehow, the city, the Lake, the great freighters, everything, looked very different from any way in which they had looked before. He watched all the city, all that great "Mount Service" from its highest height with weird, ironic pity, as one who, from a moral elevation, looks down on vast but altogether useless enterprises. What was the value of these things? Nothing. People would live and die, encumber the earth and get off it, just the same as always—just the same as before the early French *coureurs de bois*, with Daniel Greysolon, Sieur de Lhut among them, came to the Head of the Lakes; just the same as before America was discovered. There would be just as much sorrow and no more happiness: he was quite sure of that. It was all vain, he told himself: vain, vain. A big steamer cried out, but he would not even look toward it.

He walked past Andy's cave. It seemed to be vacant now. Then he went and stood before Jean's cottage. Jean came out of the house holding two little children by the hand, a boy and a girl. They were both like Jean, and he knew them to be her children. She came straight up to him and said, "You have been long gone, sir. Have you forgotten your friends?"

Cried John, "I can have no friends any more."

At that Jean and the children began to fade. But Jean, before she had gone into complete nothingness, said: "He that believes he can have no friends, can have no friends." And so she was gone.

And John came back down into the city, and went up into the Arrowhead Building to speak with Mr. Proteus, for he feared that he might not have sent sufficient funds to that man to hold his bondsmen free of loss. And when he met Mr. Proteus, he asked him, first of all things: "How is Miss Banyard?"

Mr. Proteus said, "She is sick."

John, somehow, could not understand. So he asked again.

Then said Mr. Proteus once more, "She is sick."

"Sick?" repeated John. "I do not understand. How can she be sick?"

"I tell you she is sick," cried the deep voice another time. "Can't you get the meaning of plain English?

She's sick. S-i-k, sick." And John was wide awake in the hay.

There were actual voices in the barn, down below. One of these was running on. "I told you last night that she was sick."

"Well," said the other, "if this is a sick cow, I never saw a well one. What do you call the name of her complaint, Dr. Smart-aleck, Dr. Know-it-all?"

The other voice answered, and the first voice made rejoinder. And so on.

Remedies were then discussed, and John, sleepy and worn out though he was, could sleep no longer.

At length he pulled out of the hay, clambered up over it and descended on the other side, arriving at length on the bare loft floor.

He came within an ace of "bawling" the people "out," of asking them what they meant by disturbing a man in the middle of the night, by breaking up a tired person's rest—and all for the sake of a fool cow. But he pressed his hand against his hot forehead, and somehow managed to refrain.

He went to the head of the stairs and tried to catch a glimpse of the people who were making so much noise. The cow, by this time, was adding furious protests to the terrors of the night.

John slowly descended the stairs, and looked over at the farther end of the barn. In the light of a lantern hanging from a rafter, stood people about a

recumbent cow. They were in various attitudes of deep pity, rank self-assertion, sheer inborn helplessness, and unmistakable combativeness.

Some of the people looked up, saw John. One man came half way to him, went disgustedly back.

John left the barn without a single word from anybody. These people, to all appearance, paid no more attention to tramps in their barns than to blackbirds in their trees.

In any case his troubles did not concern them. Why tramps were tramps did not interest them. They had money tied up in that cow.

John trudged more than a mile, got into another barn. He had hardly ensconsced himself in the soft, sweet hay, when he became aware that he had reached a noisier neighborhood than the other. Near by was an orchestra. Believe his ears or not, there was an orchestra.

Then he heard the rhythmic sound of many heavy feet and an insistent voice "calling off."

After all there was a great satisfaction in feeling that he was outside these things, the follies, the vanities. What heartaches in that room this night, and all about nothing!

But as the dancing kept on, an old tenderness began to sweep through him, the old, old need of Jean. And he cried aloud, even there in the dusty hay and to the dusty rafters: "O Jean, Jean! I have

left you for good and all, my girl. Will you not be so kind as I, go away and let *me* be?"

He heard a scampering among the rafters, and, looking up, saw, dimly, a rat. Then came another and another still, to join the first. All were busy with some queer animal project, he could not say what.

The wind, suddenly changing its direction, slammed the loft door to. The rats scampered away. John kept looking at the place where they had just been, wondering at the ways of rats and men, when something once more shifted. He was standing beside a big blue lake in the radiance of noonday. A little launch was approaching the strand whereon he stood. He forced his weary eyes open. He knew only too well who would step out of the launch as soon as its keel should grate upon the sand.

His eyes were closing of themselves once more. He began to see the Lake again. The orchestra near by blew a volcanic climax of sound, and, before his lids could again close, he crawled out of the hay and left the barn.

On the road again. Half an hour later, into another barn, other hay.

Suddenly he awoke. From where he lay he could see through a knot-hole. The hole was near his eye, so that, moving a little, he could easily behold trees

and grass, the contours of low hills, bright sky and clouds, the haystacks and houses of men. Cheery voices in the distance.

He wiggled more deeply into the hay.

The voices came closer, and soon he could hear steps accompanying them. Steps in the barn! Pigeons, no doubt in boxes under the eaves, fluttered and cooed.

The steps passed into silence. The pigeons quieted down, and nothing was left but the sound of horses munching. Munch, munch! Munch, munch, munch!

Of a sudden he opened his eyes, and there was broad daylight—but with thunder rumbling in the distance. Was today Sunday? He could not be sure, but the horses were still munching. Yes, it must be Sunday.

He arose and went into another part of the loft. It was good hiding there too, and, from a place in the hay, he could look out through a dusty window —see a neat two-story white house with grass and trees and flowers about it. It would be much better to lie in a place where, whenever he awakened, he could observe, without moving a muscle, all the farmer's yard and home.

A woman came out of the house even then, went back, and at once returned, advancing very near the barn. She was a young woman, sunbonnetted, not very tall, somewhat graceful. Now he got a

glimpse of her face. She was very, very comely. He noted all these points as if he had been looking at a far distant woman indeed—say a woman in the moon.

He began to feel hungry. He would not buy his breakfast at the house, neither would he work. He was through working. He could, of course, have paid his way, but he felt a reluctance at entering into human society again.

He went down into the lower part of the barn. Found, in some of the mangers, the most delicious fresh eggs. When he had finished with them, he pinned a dollar bill to a conspicuous post, went back up into the mow and wormed his way into the hay in a place convenient to the window. He was far enough from where any one might come prodding with a fork and kill him as he slept.

And he slept, slept like a tombstone. Slept the livelong day, slept the blessed night that followed. And when he had once more awakened, he was once again hungry. The feeling that his brain had turned to a ball of hot metal expanding inside his skull, was not quite so intense.

He went below; devoured more eggs; leaving the barn, went to the watering trough, which was out of view of the house; drank his great fill.

Then he returned to the barn and mounted into the loft once more. It was good to be there, to be all

alone. How he hated the human species—or thought he hated it. Then he remembered that he had not paid for the last eggs.

He did not know the market price of eggs or just how many he had eaten, but he pinned another dollar to the post—the first bill had already been taken away, he noticed—and then went back to the loft.

In the hay again, he recalled that, while out at the drinking-trough, he had felt drops of rain dashing in his face. And, at this, a storm broke roaringly loose above him. He lay in the hay with a sense of infinite luxury, listening while peal on peal of thunder crashed and roared and detonated, and then went dying sadly away into infinite distances.

Ah, it was very good! Very good! Nothing to do! The thunder roared up before him picture after picture of his well-loved boyhood, pictures of himself as he had lain in his cosey Iowa attic by night, hearkening to far-away rumblings and dreaming great dreams. He pitied that little boy as if he had actually been some other person than himself, pitied yet also envied. Ah, poor little boy that had known not the world, the great unfeeling world; yet, also, happy little boy!

Steps again! Some one mounting to the loft! He drew softly back into the hay, holding his vexed breath.

CHAPTER XXXV

JANE

CHAPTER XXXV

Jane

THE farmer began pitching hay down to the horses. John began to think that, as soon as the farmer had gone, he would better leave the barn and be off again on his pilgrimage. Then he remembered how muddy and chill the roads must be, and foresaw that all his pitiful years lay ahead of him just like a soaked and muddy road. Thunder again. He fairly immersed himself in the sound, assimilated it, became part and portion of it, was drugged and thoroughly narcotized by it. Better to lie listening to the thunder than to go tramping, tramping. Then he began to be filled with the sweet sorrow of love again.

A step sounded close beside him, a voice. "You'd better come out of there, Mister, and go with me to the house."

John rubbed his eyes and looked up. "How did you know I was here?"

"You left a dollar twice, down below. So you must 'a' been staying. It's very dirty and dusty, and yet damp too, up here." His voice was sweetly grave and kind.

After waiting some moments for a reply and

receiving none, he continued: "Mother said she didn't believe you could be any common tramp, because common tramps don't trouble to leave pay for things they take." He waited again.

Then he once more continued. "You needn't fear we'd make you work if you didn't want to. We're mighty short-handed, this time of year, but you can stay just till the roads is good again if you like, and we'll be glad to have your company."

John came out. He didn't believe that people like these would notify the police about him, although, of course, they must be shrewd enough to know that men who neither work nor beg nor steal, cannot be tramping about the country without some very strange reason. At all events, he would take a chance on them. As soon as the roads dried, he would move on. He would even seek some railroad station, ride to a large city, change cars, ride out in a different direction, then take to the wagon roads again. He rather feared the railroad tracks, because he believed them much more likely to harbor detection for him than the wagon roads. There were very many tramps on the tracks. These would learn about him, perchance tell on him for the reward which, sooner or later, would inevitably be offered for his apprehension.

He went with the farmer to the house, and was led round into the kitchen. "Perhaps you'd like to

clean up," suggested Mr. Farmer. John washed hands and face. He had donned, in Granville, a dark blue shirt with an attached collar, garments such as farmhands wear, so that, even yet, his collar did not look much soiled. So at least he reflected as, looking into the kitchen mirror, he gave final touches to his hair.

"Let's go up the back stair," said Mr. Farmer. John went up the steep steps after him.

"My name's Grouse," continued the farmer. "My daughter and my wife lives with me. We ain't got no son. We had a little boy once— This is your room. Go in and make yourself to home there. Some of my clo'es is in the closet, an' you an' me is just about the same size. Put on whatever you want to. Ain't nothin' fancy there. Dinner'll be ready in about fifteen minutes."

In less than fifteen minutes John was downstairs and had been presented to the mother and to "Jane." "So near, in sound, that name is to 'Jean,' " thought John, "yet Jean and Jane the persons are so vastly different in appearance, in manner, in everything." Jean was dark and had bright blue eyes. Jane was blonde, like her father, and her eyes were amber. Jean was quick in manner, Jane slow, and very precise and methodical. And there was, in every simple thing that Jane did, a quiet thoughtfulness and consideration that argued a very earnest,

almost prayerful, mind. Her voice was low and rich and sweet—that, too, almost like her father's. And, as the four talked at table, she took the same earnest views as her father about everything. The mother was of medium height, silent and even slower of motion and of thought than Jane. Jane, for the most part, it was who waited on the table. John felt sure that she was very dutiful and kind.

The storm continued all that afternoon and evening. John spent the most of his afternoon hours in his own room, but, after supper, sat with the rest about a blazing fire in the fire-place, lest he seem rude to these dear hospitable people. They, by the bye, were so regardful of his feelings that they did not ask him anything at all about himself or his business, not so much as even his name.

The farmer did most of the talking—in his calm, considerate, highly amplified manner. Sometimes the mother put in, but only to correct her husband's memory about some name or date. Once, to relieve the sheer monotony, John thought, Mr. Grouse rallied Jane on some ancient, but ardent, affair of love which she had been supposed to have had.

Jane flushed crimson, arose awkwardly, and, without a word to anyone, went off to bed. John thought little of the matter at the time, and, shortly after, was told that this was bedtime "in these parts," and was handed a kerosene lamp.

In the morning the storm had vanished. The farmer, after breakfast, went down to the barn to repair harness, a plow and two mowers. John soon followed him, and, from having helped his father with tools and carpentry, proved a handy assistant in these affairs. Ere the work was ended, he and Mr. Grouse had become fast friends.

Two days later John was driving a mower in the hayfields. In his soul he felt that he ought not to be delaying here further, but these good people had been so extremely kind and considerate toward him, that he felt it would only be brutal not to try to help them out in their shorthandedness.

Jane became kinder and kinder toward him, whenever he went to the house, and, at meals, she listened to his talk— Well, there are ways and ways of listening, and John soon saw that Jane's way was not the way of mere friendliness.

Once the father and mother went out of the room, leaving them twain together. John, looking up, caught the amber eyes resting full upon his, and the worship which he beheld within them cut him to the heart. In fact he could not look at those eyes again. Too much they were like the eyes of A-gáh-pe. He could only gaze, school-boy fashion, over at the farther wall, studying there the wall-paper—a faint design of faded rose wreaths twining about broken columns.

The room was full of a tense silence. Presently, very far away, he heard the yelping of a dog—a mere pulse in the unreal air. Then the sound of soft words from the hen yard behind the hen-house. Then the lowing of a distant cow, like a sad horn. A fly began buzzing outside the window, trying to get in. John quickly arose.

He began carelessly humming an old song. He asked, without looking at her: "Jane, won't you prepare me a little lunch to take with me, when I leave you all for good today?"

Jane did not reply, but walked swiftly out of the house and to the hen yard. In a few moments, Mr. and Mrs. Grouse came back. Father Grouse insisted on paying his hand money (which cash John to the last refused) while the mother prepared an elaborate lunch and packed it in a neat pasteboard box and handed it to John. Then of a sudden she went and got a little bible, re-opened the box, while John held it, and put the bible into the box.

When she had finished tying the box again, she said: "God bless you, and give you a good journey."

"God bless you," added her husband, "and give you mercy, grace, and peace. God bless you." As John started away, Father Grouse asked, all of a sudden, "Why, where's Jane?"

Mother Grouse took him gently by the sleeve, and said: "Jane's all tied up with the chickens, and

can't leave just now. Don't bother, Daddy. And you, our son, we shouldn't ought to keep you any more. You *must* go."

"Thank you for all the good help you've been to us," added Mr. Grouse.

"And, if you ever take a notion to write," added Mrs. Grouse, "remember that Jane and all of us will always be glad to hear from you."

John ran swiftly down to the gate and was off.

Nor did he quite stop running till half a mile away. Then he stopped, turned and listened. There was still just the yelping of the far off dog—a mere pulse in the unreal air. That and the lowing of a cow, at very long intervals, like a sad horn in the fairy distance. He strained his ears. Perspiration gathered on his forehead. "Ah Jean, Jean," he cried, at last, "and I cannot get rid of you at all!"

CHAPTER XXXVI

CHI. AS A STATION ON THE NOWHERE LINE

CHAPTER XXXVI

Chi. as a Station on the Nowhere Line

BANKS and factories, stores and vast warehouses! Arriving and departing trains! Noises and smells illimitable! John, as usual, was silently amazed at the distance of all these things from his present self. He had wintered in Chicago—"Chi" the gentlemen of the road called it. Popular wintering place, too, with all these. He had not, however, in Chicago, had much to do with tramps, other tramps. One or two he knew by sight, and that was all. He lived at a fourth-rate hostelry—The Quiet Tavern—and it was truly as quiet as anything was or could be in Chicago. There had been campaigns against noises here, but still—O the noise! Strange that he hated noise here and yet had loved it in Duluth. Twice he had written to Mr. Von Bulow, and twice he had been supplied with funds.

Of his financial state none guessed. He had turned out a beard, which, though he kept it always closely cropped, masked almost completely his old-time appearance. He walked with a slouch, and one of his shoulders had come to be higher than the other. These last two characteristics had been acquired unconsciously. So, too, had the cynical, suspicious expression of his face.

One night, in his lonely room at The Quiet Tavern, he fell asleep—while thinking, as usual, of Duluth and Jean. He seemed, next, to be living in a city which was like almost any other city, except that its inhabitants were not men but monsters—monsters of forms incredibly inhuman, speaking, all of them, human speech—and indeed the English language—and making and dickering and selling and buying, yet so repulsively inhuman in appearance that he called out, even there in the semi-silence of The Quiet Tavern: "O my God, what are these beings that talk and act so much like men?" And the dreamer thought that a Voice answered, "These *are* men. But I have given thee the power to see their souls, and not to see their bodies." And the dreamer cried again, "There is no sympathy between these men and me. Nor can there be any sympathy between them and any kind of men I would love, or even between any one of themselves and any other of themselves. Therefore suffer me, O Voice, I pray thee, to awake and to find that all these monsters are but things in an untrue dream. For behold, my soul it is dead because of lack of sympathy and human companionship."

He had his way about the awakening, but he knew that the dream was, in a sense, not wholly a dream. Then the dream set him to wishing—wishing for he knew not what. The days were growing longer,

the air, even here in the city, softer and warmer. And once, as he idly wandered about the West Side of town, he caught a glimpse of country fields with a clear, warm, stainless blue above them. Then he knew what it was that the dream had set him wishing for. There had grown up in him the true tramp's annual springtime fever, the wanderlust, the longing to escape from monstrous souls—away and away.

Railroad tracks lay at no great distance. Reaching one of them, he began to walk along it.

Why not continue walking? He had left nothing in the tavern, owed the tavern keeper nothing. Then he thought with pain, as he looked back over the nearly three million souls and the smoke-pall spread over them, that not one single person of all those nearly three millions, would care about, even know of, his departure.

He kept on walking.

CHAPTER XXXVII
A MAN OF THE ABYSS

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A Man of the Abyss

IN THE previous spring, summer, and fall, he had held mostly to the country roads. His reason had been that, on the country roads, tramps were not so numerous as on railroad tracks, and he did not want to meet tramps. This was not merely because he had feared that tramps, had they come to know him, might have been tempted to deliver him up for a reward, but also because he had had an instinctive aversion to these folk—these dirty, unkempt, indolent, irresponsible vagrants. Not, as a rule, serious criminals, they were, nevertheless, he had thought, bad enough, not fit even for a fugitive from injustice to associate with. But the two or three "'bos" he had known by sight in Chicago had not seemed so very repulsive in appearance, and, in manners, they had appeared to be cheerful, vivacious, even at times attractively gay. He believed he would risk the railroad tracks this year. At all events, he would keep himself apart from any or all of this gentry, just so long as he might choose.

Fate led him to a village with a single store, ice-cream parlor, and lunch-room combined. There he ate a ham sandwich, drank a cup of coffee, and

filled his pockets with the usual lunch of cheese and crackers, together with a few other things.

Just as he started to leave the store, a "stiff" came in. John had never quite seen his like before, and stopped to observe him closely. There was no reason at all why John should be in a hurry, ever.

The "bo" asked for a "hand out," but got a "bawling out" instead. "You, you blankety-blank double son-of-a-blank, you get out, double blank your blankety-blank!" The bo started to run, but the proprietor caught him and kicked him. Would have kicked him more, but John interfered. "Let him have what he wants."

"You pay?"

"Yes, I'll pay."

The bo looked his gratitude, and, to express his immense necessity for immediate sustenance, took hold of his vest with both hands, at the lowermost edge thereof, and stretched the garment dismally outward and upward.

John handed the proprietor a ten-dollar bill. The man gave it a close scrutiny, drew a long sigh, and asked: "How much?"

"Just as much as he can eat," answered John.

"Careful, Boss," admonished the hobo. "You don't knows my capacity."

"All you've got to do with your capacity is to fill it," responded John.

The tramp filled it, John paid, got change, and the two went out of the store together. On the sidewalk they stopped, as if preparatory to parting. "Dat was good of you, Friend," said the bo. "Seen you before, haven't I—somewheres? Helped you, somehow, ain't I, somewheres?" He smiled, and John took closer stock of his physical appearance. He was tall, square-shouldered, with iron-gray hair and a six-day stubble of the same mixed color, had one eye out and the other (of a bright, piercing blue) surrounded by a large areola of yellow and green. He wore a battered soft hat with a hole in it, shoes but no socks, neither collar nor tie.

They had moved away from the store a few steps. "You ain't a-goin' to call me 'Friend,' like I done called you?"

"Not yet."

"I'll make you do it. Who be you—what's your moniker?"

"John Smith." John always thought it best to give his real name. It was so extremely common a name, that it served him far better than any pseudonym could have done.

"That's what they all say, except me. My name's Bo. I'm trying to succeed in my chosen vacation."

"*Vo*cation?"

"No, *va*cation. This is my *va*cation—slingin' the feets an' gettin' the eats." He picked his feet up

quickly, alternately, setting them down in precisely the same places that he had taken them up from.

"Where are you going?"

"I don't know. You?"

John shook his head.

"Alone?"

"Yes."

"Me too."

They began, all at once, to walk away together. When they had come to the railroad track, John pointed southwest. "That was the way *I* was going."

"I was goin' the other way. But your way's my way."

"Which way does this way go to?"

"I don't know. But it's a good way: they ain't no work along it—none you *have* to do."

"Let's take it."

"She's took." They walked on together.

"Where do you come from?" asked John. "I mean, originally."

"From anywhere and everywhere. I'm goin' to the cemetery, of course—like everybody else."

John considered a moment. Then he said, "I lived in a city so steep that it was steeper than straight up and down. It—it looked out over a great green plain. I was rich, but I'd made my money myself." Then a sudden wave of suspicion swept over him. It would be much safer to mislead

this tramp. "And now—O how I am poor!"

Bo gave a lordly wave of the hand, as if dismissing the whole subject.

"Nor can I ever be quite rich again. I have learned the worthlessness of all things human."

"What's her name, Johnnie?"

John ignored the question, but was not offended. On the contrary, he found the off-hand way of the tramp something of a solace. He continued, "Yes, I am poor, very poor."

"You lie, Pard. I seen you get that change for a semi-sawbuck. But you're safe, Johnnie. If I'd 'a' wanted your money, I'd 'a' hit you a lick on the coco, just a minute or two back, when your occiput was turned and you was lookin' first toward Chi then into the southwest. You lied about your city too. They ain't no cities been built in this country on a place that's steeper'n straight up an' down, when a great green plain's a-lyin' right there before 'em. *Used* to build 'em that way all over Europe, Wyrup and Syrup in old times, 'cause a castle had to be set in the middle to pertect 'em, an' castles have to be in high up places to give pertection. Your town had water in front of it, an' you ain't pore, even now. But you lost *her*. That's the only way you're pore."

John looked up, not hurt but in sheer amazement. Here was an ignoramus, who, in spite of his ignorance, saw into human hearts.

"Ain't us goin' to start an' ride the rods at the next town, Jack?"

"No. You mean, lie along the rods under a freight car, and take chances on being ground to death beneath the wheels, if you happen to go to sleep lulled by the noises of the train?"

Bo nodded. "Er else ride her blind."

"What do you mean by 'ride her blind'?"

"Get onto the front end of a baggage car, jest behind the tender. That end of the baggage car is blind (that is, without no door) an' so they can't nobody come out and shove you off. Jest as she pulls into a station, you *jump* off. Then you run a little ahead, an' as the old caravan starts to go by, you jump 'er, and ride blind again."

"Bo," said John, "I'm a man that mustn't be *caught*, riding blind or riding any other way."

"So? Bad as that? Then, Pard, you needs a pard, and I'm the pard you'se needin'." He began to sing, in a husky barytone, the old tramp pal-song:

" 'I had a pal from everywhere,
From everywhere, from everywhere.
We went a-trampin' everywhere,
To everywhere, to everywhere.
We et the crackers an' the cheese,
An' dodged the crowds that give us a wheeze.[1]
Then walked in clover plumb up to our knees.

[1] A breathless run.

We watched the sweet flowers in the breeze
Bent down by burley bumble bees.
We took our dum blanked easiest ease,
As we went trampin' everywhere, everywhere.'

Pard, forgive me: I ain't much of a singer."

"You're the best singer in the world, Bo."

With one dirty hand Bo removed his hat, the other he laid across his heart. Then he set one foot behind him, resting it gracefully on the toes, and, slowly bending forward, responded: "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm very much obliged to you for them kind woids, which I knows you doesn't mean."

"But I do mean them, Bo. To prove it, I will ask you to sing once again."

"Then ask it."

"Sing once again, please."

Bo sang, but his song was so filthy that John interrupted, crying: "Not that, not that."

"O, I see," commented Bo. "You're one of them fellers that takes a good skirt seriously."

"I take *all* skirts seriously," answered John. "And I wish that all of them took themselves as seriously as decent men would take them."

"Well, if you can't stand no he-man stuff, here's one that'll suit you—maybe. Accent strong on the 'maybe.' "

They had come to a place where a little platform was, at a level with the track, a mere square of hard,

bare ground, whereon a handcar would be sided while a train ran by. Bo took John by the shoulders and set him in the middle of the track with his face toward the platform. What a firm touch the old chap had, yet, withal what a gentle! John had almost felt a thrill at the pressure of those strong, dirty hands. Bo went and stood in the middle of the platform. "You haven't got no such thing as a drink about you, Jack?"

"No."

"Nor tobaccy?"

"No."

"Then I can only do the best I can, ladies and gentlemen; but I labor under extreme difficulties."

He sang, indifferently well, and in the old husky voice which was all the voice he had—

"My sweetheart dwelt upon a hill.
Her eyes were blue as is the sea.
Her voice was like a laughing rill—
O she was very much to me!"

John turned aside his shaking head, not because of the beauty of the singing, but because of the sound of a voice that was stilled by distance and because of eyes which were bluer than the waters of a great lake. Bo saw the change in his audience, and was stimulated to even greater effort. So he bawled out the chorus like an Irish umpire at a ball game:

"And she loved me troo-oo-ly!
And she loved me troo-oo-ly!"

Then he stopped for a moment to collect in his one auditor the necessary amount of "expectant attention." When he began singing again, he lowered his husky voice to a deep whisper of tragic intensity:

"There came a man of handsome mi-en
Whose heart was black as is the storm.
My love from me he soon did we-an—
I CRUSHED him as he were a worm."

"No, no!" cried John. "No, no! No more of that, Bo. Let us be moving."

Bo stepped promptly to John's side, grasped him by the shoulder as though his hand were the hand of justice itself, and then, in a voice of startling distinctness (for Bo) pronounced: "You—killed—him—I'm—on—to—you."

"No," pleaded John, attempting to laugh. "I never killed anybody. You're sharp, Bo, but you're far from the truth."

Bo jerked the shoulder. Again in staccato: "You—killed—him—I—say—and—I—sentences—you—to a little boot."

"No boot in this caravan," adjudged John, with finality. Then he predicted, "and there isn't going to be any."

"I don't likes to be without boot," protested Bo.

"But you needs the company, Jacky, and, whatever you been an' done, it don't makes no difference to me, fer I ain't so very much myself. As the high priest, Jaddúa, was unto Alexander, and as Jonathan unto David, and as Abraham unto Abimelech, so will I be unto thee, O blood of my blood and bone of my bone. And whithersoever thou goest—boot or no boot—I'll go with thee—even unto sulphur and back. Ah-h-h—"

"Bo," interrupted John, "you've been Sherlocking. And so now I—"

Bo interrupted in turn. "And I will be as a good dog to thee, although I ain't no son of a gun either. An' I won't never ask you no questions no more'n a dog would."

"And so I—"

"Because I knows all about you now, anyway; an' it's all right."

"And so I'm going to go Sherlocking in my turn. You're not an ignorant man, contrary to what you're pretending to be. You've had at least a little college education. And this dialect of yours, it's all put on. It isn't the same kind of dialect two minutes in succession. Bo, give me the true story of your life."

Bo responded like a rubber ball coming back. "I preached—I loved—I fell."

"So-o-o-o!" John looked him straight in the one eye. "I thought you had been a preacher, just as

soon as I heard you mention Jaddúa, the High Priest of Jerusalem."

"I didn't say, 'preached,' I said 'teached.' I was a private teacher. I taught another man's wife—in his absence. I had a class of one, you see. A feller named Browning wrote about us. *Think* his name was Browning. He says (speakin' *fer* me):

> 'An' left the attic, there
> By the rim of the bottle labeled "Ether,"
> An' stole from stair to stair,
> An' stood by the rose-wreathed gate—alas!
> We loved, sir, used to meet.
> How sad and bad and mad it was;
> But then—how it was sweet!' "

"And *you* killed *him*, Bo?"

"You bet I ain't killed nobody. Too 'fraid of hants. And you can see he ain't killed *me*."

"Where did you get that gloriously colored eye, Bo?"

"That?" He put a finger to the encircled organ. "O that was give me by a student at the University of Michigan back in 'those dear old college days.' Mark of his great esteem and gratitude. I was his professor."

"And, after that, she set the dog on you, shouting: 'We don't allow tramps here.' "

Bo stopped in his tracks. John turned and gazed

on him steadily. Bo slowly removed his old ragged coat, went and laid it with extreme care in a grassy place on the side of the embankment, then came back and tucked up his sleeves, displaying, as he did so, arms that looked like the legs of a year-old bull. "If you think," he remarked with extreme carelessness, "that any woman ever gimme a ring like *that*, you've a right to your opinion, but you've got to prove it."

"How prove it?" asked John, with affected innocence.

Bo turned down his sleeves again, went and put on his coat, and returned to John's side, and, as they marched away, he shouted the old tramp marching-song:

> " 'Here we go, a-slingin' our feet,
> A-slingin' our feet, a-slingin' our feet.
> An' when we stop, we likes to eat,
> You'll *see* us eat, you'll OBSERVE us eat,
> For we don't give a blank for nobody.'

Did I perceive your actions correctly, Mr. Smith, when I thought I apprehended you back in Woolsboro a-buyin', as I supposed, cheese and crackers for both of us?"

"You did."

"*And* Bologna sausage?"

"And Bologna sausage."

"And *two* bottles of soda pop?"

"Not two, four. Why do you point at that pile of

ties? Ah yes, I see. A good place to eat. Here we go, then."

They ate ravenously, and Bo forgot to sing, even to talk. When they had finished, Bo suggested: "Throw the bones behind you, gents, as fast as you finish suckin' 'em. That's Emily Holt." Then, after a little, licking the crumbs off his fingers, he asked: "Did you ever go sailin' on one of them ships that used to ply over that there grassy green medder surroundin' your city set upon a hill?"

"No, Bo. I'm a banker by occupation."

"And knew the combination as well as the occupation?"

John fell into the mood. "Here's all they'd get if they caught me." He held up a silver dollar.

"I once was a skipper," ran ahead Bo, "on a ship they called 'The Dollar Chaser.' She was my ship. There was ninety-seven passengers on that ship, includin' one little girl. One day, pacin' the deck, I saw a wisp of smoke peek up between two boards. Then followed a tongue of flame. That tongue says, 'Hist! Death!' I says, 'Not so.' I calls my men into action. They doesn't act. I calls them passengers into action. They doesn't act. Then I takes that little che-ild up in my left arm, an' holdin' her so, in safety, I fought the fire with the other arm. There was lots o' boot in the hold o' the ship, but I pays no attention to it. I was interested in water—that

once. Cupful after cupful I dips up out o' the sea, an' throws it into the hold o' the ship. One cupful I throws in a perfect lady's face. My, but she was mad, and how she did cuss me! But water an' cussin' was alike of no use.

"There was a prohibitionist on board that ship. He lost his mind—plumb. He throws a lighted match into the boot, an' bing! the ship exploded.

"Then it was a terrible sight I saw, as I swum, swam, and swimmed about them 'ere waters. There an actress' leg, twisted out of shape and torn from its other trunk, bobbed up and down, and then disappeared. Here a mutilated and bleeding body floated for a moment, then sank through a circle of blood which fouled the pure water of the seas."

"And you swam eighteen hundred miles with the child, landed her safely, and were given a great reward—"

"Of a lead dollar. I got it yet."

He actually produced a lead dollar. "That dollar was gimme," he went on, "by an old pal. He wa'nt no such pal as you be. He had only eight dollars. You got nine, nine plus. His name was Red George."

"Red George?"

"Aha! You knowed him?"

"Not quite sure about it. There've been many Red Georges."

"This Red George, he was born on Lake Superior.

After he left me, he went to Granville—he said to enter the university there, but I heard later he had entered the Sob Stuff Inn instead.

"He was borned in dis country of American parents an' wit' a gold spoon in 'is mout'. A lovin' uncle, dat chanced to be his guardian and godfather, kindly removed de spoon (fer fear de child 'd swaller it) an' put it in his own pocket. Reddy he lives fer a short time in de English quarter of an eastern American manufacturin' town, an' he lived in various other regions of de country at different times. So he spoke a funny kind of dialect—a cross-breed betwixt London English, Dooloot' Irish, clipped South American, would-be-Gentlemanese, College Professor talk, t'ieves' slang, Sunday School gibberish, an' a few other discordant linguistic and euphonious elements. In a woid, 'e talked like me, on'y woise."

"He had no thumb on his right hand, and he lies in Lake Superior."

"You knowed him—Red George? Dead?"

"That's why he lies in Lake Superior. On water he was born, and to water he returned—although the thing he hated worst was water. Under what circumstances did you make the rubicund gentleman's acquaintance?"

Bo considered for a long time. Finally he went on, "I'm a millionaire, Boss." Then he stopped again, no doubt thinking of Red George. John decided

that, for his own sake, it might be best not to have further conversation about Red George. So he gladly suffered Bo to change the subject.

Bo began again, "I'm a millionaire, an' I'm just out lookin' up me healt'. Artomobiles ain't no good. Dey rests you, but dey exercises nit.

"No, I won't fool you no longer. I'm a magazine writer. I'm famous, too, but I'm out fer findin' material, curious characters, you know—you're one of 'em."

"You talk like a fool, Bo," commented John, turning a loving eye on his world-mate nevertheless. "You talk like a—like a—like a man telling numerous contradictory stories about himself, so that if, some time, he should accidentally give himself away, his one auditor wouldn't know whether he was telling the truth or not. You talk like—"

"Like a dick."

"Dick?"

"Yeh—a detective. Dey's de biggest fools on eart'."

"You're a preacher, a teacher, a sailor, a college professor, a naturalist, a sentimentalist, a millionaire, a magazine writer—"

"An' a doctor, an' a lawyer, an' a real estate agent, an' a fake estate agent, an' a busted banker, an' a rich wine merchant—O you wine—" He lifted up and flapped his vest again. "An' a—"

"And the truth is you're nothing but a lazy old one-eyed bum—"

Bo stopped in his tracks and pretended to be offended. "Say dat again."

"Once is too often, I'm beginning to fear."

"Say dat again. If I ain't nuttin' but a lazy old one-eyed bum—well, de track runs bot' ways."

"Bo." John laid a kind hand on the tramp's shoulder. "I wouldn't take a million dollars for you." He meant it too.

"Dere now!" cried Bo. "I knowed *you* was a millionaire. Dat proves it. Anybody dat wouldn't take no million bucks (dat's six or eight million beers) fer me, he's rich, an' money ain't no indoocement to him. But you've offended me in de cosmetic area, an' my psychology ain't goin' to rest satisfied till you take it all back. Look at me straight. How many eyes I got?"

"Twenty-five hundred. But who put out the one on the left?"

"Sixteen sheriffs. Dey was seventeen, an' I pushed one off de cliff. Den I knocks down de rest, an' piles 'em up like cordwood. Den a farmer he comes up, an' bashes me in de right eye."

"I thought we said 'left.' "

"I means de left eye. Den de cordwood uncords itself, and comes at me. It was me dat gets de woist dat time. (I can't do ever't'ing can I?) Dey comes

and arrests me an' puts me in de jail, an' gives me nuttin' but salt an' water to live on.

"Den de jailer, he was a Christian, and he comes and weeps, saying: 'Verily, my brother, you needs a sup or two of boot.' Gives me de boot. I drinks de boot.

"Den I takes noo courage. I ups and bashes out de whole side of de jail, an' one of de bars a-fallin' hits me in de right eye. Hence de annular rainbow.

"I lost them there hounds in a swamp. Then I started out to go nort' again, meanin' to hit Chi an' de Associated Charities.

"Well, about dat time, dere was consid'able excitement in dem parts. I kept worryin' dem, dey kept worryin' me. Well, sir, dey kept huntin' me wit' houn's, an' kept on chasin' me wit' guns, an' ridin' in automobiles, but still I kept clear of 'em. Then they began offerin' rewards for me.

"Poor old Bo!" He took out a fearfully soiled handkerchief, and pretended to be convulsed with sobs. "Wait a minute. I can't go on. I'm so distressed w'enever I t'ink of dat poor old bum."

He put back the handkerchief. "An' den—an' den—"

"And then what?" asked John. "No more tears, Bo. On with the lie."

"An' den— You ain't never had no mutter-in-law, has you, Jackie?"

John shook his head.

"T'ank God fer dat, Jackie. Me mutter-in-law come out."

"Out? Out of where?"

"Out of where she was in. Er—out of home, out of house an' home, where she'd et me."

"Home? You never had a home, Bo. You were born in the middle of a field."

"Dis wuzn't de home where I was born. It was de home where I'd left me wife—me tent' wife. An' dis wus de tent' mutter-in-law."

"You must be attractive to women, Bo, to have been able to get ten of them."

"Anybody can get 'em. But it takes a real guy to stay wit' em. I got a wife in every state in de Union. Dat's why I don't believe in no advertisin'. Advertisin's good for all udder businesses. But when it comes to de business of keepin' away from your mutter-in-law in every state of de Union—" He leaned over, and gave a quick dumb show of someone looking furtively about, and then trying to sneak off unobserved.

He continued. "Me mutter-in-law comes out. An' says she, 'Why, ef dat ain't Hi'—er 'Al,' or whatever she calls me. 'Why, welcome home, Al.' An' she busts all over me at de same time. When she gets t'roo, I ain't pertickular wort' lookin' at."

"And now you've learned to love her?"

Bo ran off the track, quickly removed his coat and hung it on a barbed wire fence. Then he calmly returned and planted himself squarely before John. As he began to roll his sleeves up, he inquired: "Do you mean, kind sir, to cast any doubt upon my affection?"

"Not a particle, Bo. Bo, you ought to have been an actor."

"I am an actor. Among de udder occupations what I got, I'm a bad actor. I'm also de president of de United States, livin' round de country fer economy's sake, an' tryin' to produce economy in udders. I'm also a lily of de field, fer I toil not neither do I spin. An' yet I say unto you, Old Pal, my appetite's come back, an' I could stand a little snack."

"You shall snack, Bo."

"Look!" cried the bum dramatically, having resumed his coat. "See yonder blessed spire of a little choich, pointing upward from amid de trees? Dere's another, and another still. And wherever you see t'ree or more spires pointin' up to heaven, dere's always good grub down below—as well as de food spiritual up above. In udder woids dere's a town. Wit' dem nine odd iron men to work for us, Old Pal, we're sure to elect ourselves to a good supper—just as sure as your name ain't John Smith."

John would be dramatic in his turn. "*Bo!*" he whispered huskily.

"W'at?"

"Eggs straight up. Canned peaches. Strawberry, raspberry and vanilla ice-cream. A large beefsteak and pancakes. Four whole pies. Potatoes, toothpicks, a third cup of coffee. Then—"

"I can't stan' de t'ought of it," responded Bo. "But dat's a man-size job. Atta boy! Let us face de feast wit' courage. But eat soundless, Charley. Utterwise—sadvertisin'. An' me mutter-in-law, she might appear—"

There was no mother-in-law, or any other sort or kind of skeleton to spoil that feast. And the buxom lady who kept the restaurant—seeing that she was paid for each and every article the moment it was ordered—took no offense at the dusty appearance of her guests, or even at Bo's repeated winks at her with his one and circularly decorated eye—no, not even at his huskily whispered comment to his pal: "How easy it is to *get* 'em!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII

JANE AND JEAN AGAIN

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Jane and Jean Again

THAT night they got into a haystack not far from the town in which they had eaten.

When they had got well settled in, Bo said: "I'm a perfessor of astronomy in some good college, goin' roun' de country seekin' fer good places whence to see de stars. Get on your back, Johnny—or Charley or Jim."

"I'm on my back."

"Lookin' up? I can't see you where you are."

"Looking up."

"Gaze on de stars, den. Dey're tramps, too, de stars. Dey're on de Nowhere Road just like ourselves. 'Planets' means 'wanderers.' But how numerous dey be! It makes us smile in self-contempt—us, even do' we be bums—to t'ink of our insignificance compared wit' de countless, de millions upon millions, of stars. Sun upon sun, cloud upon cloud of blazing spheres! Nebula after nebula! De presumption of man to concern himself wit' apple-pie an' boot—man wit' his brief span of life, an' sheriffs an' dogs all about him.

"Let yonder great star be torn asunder by the near approach of yet another star. The vast convulsion

of nature is at once telegraphed to dis eart' by rays of light. But before the message reaches eart', incredibly swift although its carriers may be, new generations shall have come and gone—yea, new geologic periods arisen. The face of the earth will have been greatly changed. An' dogs an' constables will be but fossils in some t'ousand-foot rock, like currants in a bun.

"Still, just at the present moment, you an' me, two bits of protoplasm, are lyin' here on a speck of fire wit' a little crust of rock around it—here, somewhere in de outermost rim of de milky way—and we speculates on suns and deat' an' God. Backward we look in time an' forward—almost like God himself. Yet, in de winkin' of an eye—"

"You ought to be winking your own eyes, Bo, both of them. Shut up. Remember 'sadvertising."

"Yes," mumbled Bo wearily. "If you don't want people to hear you— It's sad—sad—sadver—" He was sound asleep.

And, as he slept, and John, still wakeful, kept on looking at the stars, he realized that old Bo had taken the place which A-gáh-pe (after so short but pleasant an acquaintance) had left vacant. In no least mood of disparagement did John conceive this thought, but in a high, almost a holy, sense. "Who are they," he asked himself, "that eternally compare the worthless things of earth with a dog? 'He had

no more sense or loyalty than a dog.' 'He acted like a dog,' etc. Why, the loyalest and most sympathetic beings on the planet are its good dogs." Yes, he would keep Bo beside him, be kind to him, always pay his way, and Bo would be loyal to him (of that he felt quite sure), would never fail to entertain him, or to respond to his mood—to give him, in a word, the thing which, in his present condition of mind, he chiefly needed—a deep sympathy.

Nor did Bo, to the day in which he died, fail to meet these expectations.

Meantime a tense silence settled over the world, broken only by the barking of a far-away dog—a mere pulse on the unreal air. Also by the distant lowing of a cow, as if it were a sad horn. John thought a little of Jane, then fell asleep to dream of Jean, the Lake, the bluff.

CHAPTER XXXIX

I HAD A PAL FROM EVERYWHERE

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I Had a Pal from Everywhere

JOHN awoke to hear some one clamoring, "Sadvertisin' to sleep in one haystack too long. An' ef dey ketches us, dey'll make us woik. Up, den, Johnny, an' slings de feet."

"Is it sunny or gray, Bo?"

"It *was* cloudy. But now dat you've come back to life, I see dat de shun is s'ining."

They arose and started for the nearest village, passing on the way a cottage over which hung a handkerchief as a kind of flag. After breakfast, John noticed that Bo seemed very weary. Then Bo remarked to John, as they kept "slinging" down the rails, just how weary he seemed to himself to be. At length, he sat down, unable, apparently, to go farther. Finally he suggested, "You couldn't spare no iron men, could you, Jacky, say four or five—just to let me see a doctor. I need a *good* doctor."

John drew out and gave Bo a five-dollar bill. A moment later, he sincerely regretted his generosity. Off went Bo like a flash, without him, in the way in which the two had just come. Still, after all, if Bo was going to see a doctor, he ought, really, to see one alone.

Then John began to suspect that Bo might have left him for good and all. Later still, he regarded that hypothesis as untenable. Whatever else Bo might be, he was not the man to desert a comrade—especially if the comrade had a good supply of money.

John, that night, slept in a barn near by, and did without breakfast and dinner for fear of missing Bo. At supper time he went to the neighboring farmhouse and was kindly received. After supper he was given wood to split. He also pitched hay down from the loft in which he had slept the night before. But he kept a continual close watch on the railroad track.

That night he slept beside the track on a pile of old ties, with his coat for a pillow. The people at the farmhouse had insisted on his sleeping with them, but it had been of no use. He was afraid Bo might come in the night, and, not seeing his pal at the place appointed, go slinging his feet down the line, with John to grieve after him forevermore.

Toward morning he was awakened by Bo. "All right now, my Jacky," Bo said. "But I *stole* the boot. And here's your five bucks back."

"I don't need them," said John. "Accept them as a loan, and return them only when convenient."

Bo pocketed the money. "Them fellers on the side of the hill," he went on explaining, "where the hankercher was, they had it. Now I feel better."

"You're a bad man, Bo."

"No, feelin' better. I *was* a bad man, 'bout two days back—ready for anything." And, sure enough, John saw that Bo had got himself thoroughly under control once more. Every atom of his old spirit of assurance was restored, likewise the old swagger noticeable in the swing of the shoulders, the jerk of the head, the mocking run of his talk.

Just now, it seemed, he had once been ruined for a mistake he had never committed. His career had been blasted by the blunder of a blanked short, thickset man—no, a lean one. That man had been his cousin; no, his brother. A little later it had been his father, then his mother, then an aunt.

Nevertheless, when he had first begun tramping, people had been very good to him. They would come out to greet him from each and every village, wherever he went. Sometimes they had used him like a king. One village had given him that lead dollar as a medal. He was generally known as "The Gentleman Bo." Then suddenly all became changed. He was taken and accepted, in those days, as no better than a criminal, then as a criminal indeed. It had all come about from an actual criminal who had stolen something or other, a little tiny worthless thing—diamond or the like—but had laid the blame on him, Bo. After that, even the dogs seemed to know him for a different creature. The farmers didn't have to "sic" them on him.

Then, shortly after, the other bo's of the country "got wise to" him. They found him too "high brow," thought he knew too much, and so would not associate with him.

Just as he was about to tell how, by a clever ruse, he had won their confidence again, and so been elevated to the position of king of all the hoboes in the United States, the rails of the road began humming. Then the front of a stately, but teetering, locomotive appeared around a curve—wobbling like a drunken, if gigantic and swiftly oncoming, hobo.

When the train had passed, Bo could talk of nothing else than trains. "Only to t'ink w'ere we'd 'a' been by now if we'd 'a' been in dat train, er in an hour from now, er a day. Say, Johnny, I don't know w'at scads you got about you, but listen to me. At de nex' station, you buy a good long ticket for each of us, let us ride ten hours. an' den get off, an' go slingin' our feet again."

"What direction?"

"East er west, er nort' er south."

"Let us walk a little farther," said John, "just two or three days, and then I'll take you for a good ride." He felt somewhat timid about boarding trains just yet. Better get farther from Duluth.

So they kept on walking. But the talk of Bo, now, was all of trains, trains, trains. The wanderlust was very strongly on him, and, as John would not

steal rides—how foolish!—why, the next best thing was to pay for them. At all events they were changing scenery much too slowly to quiet the ever-increasing "lust" that arose in Bo's heart.

They were now in a mining country, and, ever and anon, saw switches running out to tipples that arose like black, demon-tenanted castles all over the land. Men passing to and fro too, all about the tipples—grimy faces, grimy clothing, lamp-laden caps. "Why do coal-miners go into such places?" asked Bo. "What do they see in them? Can they get wages enough to pay them to work down there in labyrinths far off from the light?" Bad enough it was, he thought, to do any work up here on the surface, but he'd be blanked if he went to Tartarus to work for no man. "What do they do down there? How do they feel? Do they like to get back to the light again? Do they really enjoy woikin'? Aren't they different from other people, these coal-miners?" He was more of a questioner than John. He had been, he said, down in this coal country half a dozen times before, and still he couldn't understand why anybody would want to go down into a coal mine just to get a chance to woik. He did, though, he thought, have some comprehension why this was the "fightin'est" place, this Merrian town they'd get to soon, on the surface of the planet.

"Fightin'est? What's that?"

"You'll soon find out, Johnny. This is 'bloody' Wilkinson County, an' we'll soon be in Merrian, the county seat thereof."

"Why do the people look so sad?"

"Because they have no bruises."

"No bruises? Sad because they have no bruises?"

"Exactly so, my Jack. I said these are the fightin'-est people I ever see. They be, too. Start a fight and they'll love you—an' kill you. Be peaceable and they'll hate you, aldough they let you live. Now, Jack, don't start nothin' you and me can't finish—even for the whole city's esteem."

"Be at rest, Bo. I'll not start anything. Sadvertisin'. And I, just now, of all men— These are the suburbs, I suppose."

"Shoo! Not so loud! Some of the folks as lives around here 'll kill you, like as not, fer sayin' dis ain't de center of de city."

But all appeared peaceable enough. The two seeming tramps entered the public square without attracting a particle of attention. Bought soda pop (for track use) tobacco, cheese and crackers, bologna sausage, and, incidentally, ate two large, square meals.

But just before they left the court-house square, preparatory to departing from the city, Bo stopped and gazed a long farewell at the place. "Yes, these are the kindest hearted people in the world, Johnny,

but also the fightin'est. Even the children are born fightin', an' some of the biggest men'll tackle their own mutter-in-laws. Bob Ingersoll used to live here, and he fought all Christianity. Right over yonder, on the southwest corner of the court-house square is where General John A. Logan faced a whole blank mutinous regiment. Then they took up their guns again, and went down sout' fer more scrappin'."

At this moment John, who was walking one way and looking another, chanced to jostle against a negro, and, before he could apologize, the negro, an enormous chap with his grimy mining clothes still on him, turned and landed on John's lower jaw.

John went to grass. Bo landed on the negro.

The negro went down, and a white man came up behind Bo and hit him, or started to hit him, in the back of the neck. John was up by this time, and downed the white man with a blow on the jugular.

Three or four Italians came up and joined forces with the negro. Natives came up and joined Bo and John.

Policemen then arrived, and attacked both parties. Both sides attacked the policemen. Reinforcements came, and were divided between all three parties. Somebody shouted, "Give everybody hades, this is heaven!"

The sheriff came with a posse. Business men, loving a scrap and fearing lest this one might be over

before they could get a hand in it, rushed out of their stores like lightning, took the posse's guns away from them, slapped the posse's faces, kicked the posse in their stomachs, and even began firing on the mob.

The mob took some of the guns away from the business men, and went to firing back.

John and Bo, half the time, were under the mob's feet, but, at length, extricating themselves, ran, partly blinded with their own blood, into the arms of a fresh police force.

The poor 'bos were much too badly damaged to resist. They therefore submitted promptly, and went away peaceably enough, but were taken not indeed to a mouldy jail but to the mayor's spick and span office. Here they waited, under guard, until nearly night. Meantime, the noise of combat in the courthouse square died slowly away—like the great coda to a sublime piece of music.

After a while the mayor himself arrived. He had a big circle round each eye and a nose like a tomato. But, with great grace and much official dignity, he took possession of John and Bo, motored with them to his own house, gave them soap, hot water, razors, and fresh apparel. When they had made themselves presentable, he said to them: "Boys, you've started one of the finest fusses that ever came off in Wilkinson County. We all owe you a debt of the deepest

gratitude." He picked at his nose a little. "And, in token of our esteem, we've got you up a banquet this night. Come on. Let's go."

John and Bo exchanged blank glances. "Sadvertisin'," whispered Bo. "Can't be helped," John responded, sadly.

But John and Bo both finally said: O yes, they would both be very glad to accept, and they did in fact accept the honor with the very greatest, and so forth and so on.

But when they had all got into the mayor's car, to go to the banquet, the mayor suddenly discovered that he had forgotten his gloves, and left the car and went into his house after them.

Bo's chance. He took it. When they had got about twenty-six miles into the country, they abandoned the car and ran up a cross-road. Then they walked to a little railway station that Bo happened to know about, and taking train, soon were in St. Louis. Thence they "slung their feet" due north to Hannibal and, turning east, went to a little town on the Wabash Bobtail. "Pittston," Bo called it.

"What kind of town is this Pittston?" asked John.

"The readin'est and sleepin'est burg you ever seen. Why they read anything there—Browning, Emerson, Upton Sinclair, the Shakespearean felicities of Marie Corelli, last year's almanac, tables of logarithms—if particularly exciting. You could shoot off a cannon

on the public square in that town, and the sharp-eared typesetter over in the Republican office (they always got a 'Republican' and a 'Democrat' office in each of these county country-seats, or country county-seats) wouldn't only think that the editor had dropped his copy of 'Serious Thoughts for Quiet Places.' "

Before they reached the public square, they came to an old two-story brick house, just across from the Methodist church. Bo stood looking at it so long that at length John asked him what he found to admire in it. Said Bo, "Upstairs, in the southwest corner of that house, I came into the world. That fact ain't of very general interest to the planet, but it's mighty interestin' to me. Father an' Mother both dead now, and house in the hands o' strangers. An' John," he continued, "over there in the opposite corner of the lot, just by the alley, I can see what *you* can't—the beatin'est old barn in all this world. It ain't so very big, either, fifty or fifty-five by seventy, but yet, up in the loft, ensconced in dead silence and fragrant hay, I've met all the heroes and heroines of history, all the queer ducks and grand giasticutuses of poetry and old romance. There I've been the playfellow of Robin Hood, marched thousands of miles with Allan Dare and Robert Le Diable. I've—John, did *you* grow up in a barn?"

"Well, no; not exactly."

"You sometimes act like it: I didn't know."

"Won't somebody recognize you in this town?"

"No. They're all too sleepy, and I'm too much changed anyhow." He kissed his dirty hand to the big barn which did not exist, but which he saw so distinctly, and, turning, he murmured, half to himself: "Nearly all dead now, or moved away, the little kids I played theatricals with and cob fights, over in that old barn. They sold the barn for a hundred and thirty-five dollars: it was worth the world, even if the world was solid diamond. But jeers to tears, my boy. Come on. Let's go."

When they reached the public square, somebody in the county court-house stuck his head out of a second-story window, and amid the classic silence, feebly cried: "Major Noyes! Major Noyes!"

"Yes, you've made all they got," agreed Bo, solemnly. "Come on. Let's go."

"Which way?"

"Any way—so it ain't sout'."

"Why not south?" asked John.

Bo did not at once reply, but, at the southeast corner of the square, they "hit" the State Road, and, after a little eastward walking, Bo said: "The cemetery—Oakwood—stands off there to the south, and in it lie those without whom I never had been." He kissed his hand southward, and walked faster than John had ever seen him walk before.

CHAPTER XL

SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY

CHAPTER XL

Southern Hospitality

THEY crossed the Illinois River at Florence, and John planned: "I think we had better go up to Chi, and keep quiet."

But his companion would not have it so. "Let's go on an' hit the Central. Then you buy a good long ticket for each of us, an' let us board de first train and run sout'. We don't look so woise now, so dey won't t'row us off. Away down sout' in Dixie Land, dey's mighty hospitable people. An' dey'll give us good grub an' lodgin' fer nuttin', and, ef woist come to woist, dey won't help no dicks to ketch us an' send us up to no big stone house."

John, against his better judgment, bought the long tickets. He and Bo boarded the next through train, and next morning they saw the cotton fields of Dixie floating by. After breakfast in the dining-car, they stepped off the train. For the next few moments, they looked uncertainly about.

A large, square man, that John thought was built like a village bus, stepped up to John and said: "May I trouble you for a match?"

John slowly supplied the match, noting all the while that Mr. Bus was regarding him with closely

narrowed eyes. He also observed that, behind this person, was another—a little, black-browed, keen-eyed fellow, who seemed to be as lithe and nervous as a ferret, and who also was watching John narrowly.

When the big fellow had got his match, he smiled with rather undue sweetness, held out his hand, and greeted: "Welcome to Hillsboro, your Grace."

At this, a strange thing happened. The big fellow, all at once, looked into John's eyes with a distant gaze in his own. Then he teetered and fell. Bo shouted, "Cut an' run!"

John saw Bo duck between the legs of the little dark man, upset him, and dash away.

After Bo ran John.

Into the station, darting here and there to get through the crowd.

Then Bo acted with even unusual queerness. Instead of dashing out through the one big exit to the street, he ran straight up to a large, placid looking man, who was standing elegantly against a waiting-room pillar, with his ankles crossed, seeming to say to all the world: "Observe me." Bo lowered his head, butted the elegant looking gentleman in the stomach. Whereupon the elegant looking gentleman cried "Ugh!" put his hands up to his stomach, and fell down clear to the floor.

Then Bo joined John, the two rushed out through the exit, and, a moment later, they had selected from

a long line of parked vehicles a new two-passenger motorcycle, jumped into it—John at the helm—and so had dashed away.

And none too soon. Looking back, Bo cried: "Dey's a-comin'."

John put on more speed.

Then said Bo, "dis bus reminds me. I was brought up by two folks to t'ink dey was me mutter an' me fatter. But I was only an adopted child. Almost to manhood grown, an' learnin' de troot'—"

"For heaven's sake shut up, Bo. Are they gaining?"

No, loosin'. Yes, gainin' ag'in. You don't take no stock in w'at I was tellin' you. Yet it's de plumb troot'. W'y, nine times in ten w'en folks takes an innercent boy to bring up, as deir very own, dey *does* keep de troot' away from dat kid. Wants 'im never to know de troot'. So my wife an' me we never tells dis kid de troot'."

"What, O *what*, Bo, did you do to the big square man? Great heavens, I barely missed that street car!"

"I gin 'im a jiu-jiutsu to de back o' de neck. Den I upsets de little black—"

"Ferret-looking fellow by stooping between his legs. But why, O why, Bo, did you butt in the pit of the stomach that elegant looking gentleman standing against the pillar in the waiting-room?"

"Him? He ain't no gentleman. He's a dick."

"A dick? A detective, you mean?"

"You said it. He's de detective fer de depot. He run me in oncet fer eatin' a sandwich at de lunch counter, an' den not havin' no money to pay for it. Twenty-seven days I soived. Den I bashed out de walls. Been layin' dat up ag'in Mr. Dick all dese years. He can see now how it feels fer de pit of de stomach—"

"Bo, are they still gaining?"

"Gainin', Pard. Turn dat near corner—kind o' slow-like—to de right. Den out o' de syke, an' run fer it. Foller *me*. Dere wuz a' old buildin' dere last year wid a long basement. an' lots o' hidin' places. *Dis* corner. So—"

John had slowed a little. He turned the corner, and began to glide to a full stop. But a big burly negro, looking in one way and walking in another, stepped directly in front of them. Bang! they hit him, and John and Bo rolled over in the street.

Bouncing to their feet, they started to run for the old building, but, all at once, the two detectives had hold of them. John stopped when he saw that the little dark fellow had drawn a revolver. Bo ran to the sidewalk, and stood there, looking on.

"Don't you pay any attention to that big ugly fool," counselled the little black detective, looking at John, and referring to Mr. Bus.

"In the name of the State," shouted Mr. Bus—breathless, although he had run but thirty or forty paces.

"You listen to *me*," continued Mr. Ferret. "It's all for your own good, Mr. Smith. Now listen."

Just then, John knocked the revolver up, ran for the motorcycle in which the detectives (not John and Bo) had arrived, and, waiting just a moment for Bo to get in, stepped on the gas. Bo shouted, "Over de hills and faw-ee away."

"Look back, Bo."

"I'm lookin'! By de great god o' de wanderlust, what do you expect dey's doin'?"

"Don't know. What?"

"All de neighbors is out, an' dey's got buckets o' tar an' armloads o' fedders."

"For the dicks, Bo?"

"Don't go plumb nutty, Pard. Dey *ought* ter be fer de dicks. But dey're fer us. Dem people t'ink we was spiritin' away from de officers dat nigger we hit wit' de machine. Dey's comin'—scads of 'em."

"This is a great machine, Bo. They'll never catch us."

"Dey can run coicles all around us wit' de telephone an' wireless."

"Tar and feathers aren't so bad, Bo; but—"

Bo gave a wild shriek. "You ain't never felt 'em. De shame ain't all. T'ell wit' de shame. Ef dat was

de only punishment! But dat tar's hot, and dey *rolls* you in it, before dey adds de coat o' feathers. An' dat tar, it takes one week and seventeen days to peel it off from one little spot. Jack!"

"Yes, Bo."

"I ben all t'rough dis country. *Listen* to me, Jack."

"I'll do anything, Bo."

"Make fer de swamp."

"Swamp!" John had sudden visions of untold terrors.

"Uh-humph! Swamp. Nigger's refuge. On'y way to beat 'em. I been all t'rough dis country, an' knows it like a map of home. Toin—toin to de right!"

John turned.

"T'ree miles east, a half a quarter nort' again. Den a little to de right once more, and den dere's a little ole curvin' causey dat winds into de swamp about a quarter, an' stops. Dese people been too lazy ever to put it clear t'rough. Drop your cycle at de end of de causey, an' den foller me. I knows dat swamp. T'ree years ago come Fourt' of July—" and away he went with a big cock-and-bull story of former achievements in the swamp. However, John knew well enough that, at the bottom of his big tale lay a stone-hard basis of truth. At all events, he could see nothing else to do. So away they flew to the swamp.

A few moments later, the 'cycle abandoned and

hidden, John and Bo were stealthily slipping away deeper and deeper into the dampness and darkness of the paludal labyrinth.

Then cries came from far behind them. The posse had arrived at the end of the graveled causey into the swamp.

"Ketch us if dey can!" whispered Bo. "We're a good quarter ahead, an' dey can't say just which way we been took an' taken."

"But they have dogs, Bo. I hear barking."

"Dogs no good in a swamp. Dat's w'y de niggers always cut an' run fer dis place. Put yer feet edzackly where I'm puttin' mine, Honey. Utterwise— Kind o' keerless, Jack. Dese dogs don't know de trail. Neither does w'ite folks. I loint it f'um a' ol' nigger, w'ich him an' me—" And away he went with a great tale of former days altogether unlike the one he had told a few moments before.

CHAPTER XLI

THE SHACK IN THE WOOD

CHAPTER XLI

The Shack in the Wood

THAT night and several nights they spent in an old nigger-nest in a tree—which nest, according to Bo, he and that former "nigger" had constructed, now not "three," but "six" years back. It was built of sapling poles lashed between the tree's limbs high above ground with thongs of bark, and had been well covered over with leafy branches. The former branches had decayed, but John and Bo replaced them with a new foliage bed, and there they slept, quite well hidden. "Well hid is well lived," quoted Bo. There were berries, sweet and wholesome, all about them in the swamp, and Bo knew how to tell the good ones from the poisonous. But this diet soon palled, and then, one day, as John peeped between the poles that formed the foundation of their "nest," he saw a great, fat-bellied green snake, slipping and sliding along on the foul water of the marsh. After that his whole soul called for an immediate exit from the swamp. There was an ache, too, in his bones, and a strange sickly stirring in the deepest parts of his body. He knew not what this change was that so suddenly had come over him, but he laid it to the

sight of the snake. "We must leave the swamp, Bo," he said.

"I guess it'll be safe enough now, Jacky," was Bo's response. "But we got to get out, you un'erstan', on a different road from dat we come in on. In de mornin' we'll cut."

In the morning, however, John could scarcely move. Bo had to help him down out of the tree, then give him assistance along the road. Slowly, very slowly, they moved along.

In the course of hours they came to a place from which they could see out through the trees past the borders of the swamp. Here John leaned against a moss-covered trunk, while Bo kept a close look-out for intruders. After dark, they left the swamp. But they had hardly gone a dozen paces till a couple of shadowy forms leaped up from the side of the road. "Halt!" cried the two forms simultaneously.

John was only too willing to halt. The very soul of him seemed to have gone out in the last few days. In the men he recognized the little black ferret and the big square bus. "No doubt," reflected John, "the rest of the countryside, finding that no negro problem has really been involved in our chase, have dispersed to their usual occupations, while Ferret and Bus, looking for large rewards from my arrest, have continued on the watch—posting themselves, of course, at the very point where, according to those

who had had experience with fugitive negroes, the two wanted men would be most likely to reappear."

Bo argued with the men. All to no purpose.

Then the men fell to arguing with each other.

"I tell you that I, not you, have made this arrest, and that the fellow is my prisoner." So Mr. Bus.

"And *I* tell you that you're a fool, and that you don't even know who 'the fellow' is. Your Grace—" He placed a hand on John's right arm. "'Tis I alone who really know you."

But the big fellow struck Mr. Ferret a fearful blow on the jaw, so that the little dark man flew backwards and splash! he went into the water at the side of the road.

Then Bo unlimbered, and splash! went Mr. Bus after Mr. Ferret.

"Come along, Honey," shouted Bo, and putting his strong right arm under John's left, clean to his right arm-pit, supported his back, and helped him along. "Ah, dere it is!" he presently cried.

"What?"

"Deyr cyc. Dey's at loggerheads wit' each udder, an' yet, wantin' de same man, dey travels along togedder."

"Thank God for their machine," cried poor John.

With Bo at the helm, the two men sped along beneath the lambent southern constellations. The wind blew sweetly off the cotton and cane fields.

There was, as Bo thought, nothing but health and happiness in the situation.

But John moaned and groaned. "The swamp, Bo. The swamp's killed me. the swamp and the sight of the snake."

Then Bo, in anguish: "Ah w'at's eatin' on ye, Johnny? You'll be all right in de mornin'." However, he did not believe his own words.

"Bo!"

"W'at, my little Jacky?"

"Are they likely to follow us up?"

"Not *dis* night, Johnny. We got deir machine. An' dey won't be too frisky, neider, for a day or two, after dat recent swattin' w'at dey got."

"Bo, can we go to a hotel? I can't think for myself."

"You got to tell *me*, Jacky. I don't know w'at you been an' done."

"Nothing at all wrong, Bo dear. Yet—no, we simply can't go to a hotel, with all the countryside alarmed about us. No. A haystack then, as usual."

"Say a barn."

"Well, a barn."

"Brace up, Jacky, an' I'll hit 'er hard fer de blue distance, just a few minutes more. Den we'll abandon dis machine, an' I'll get you into a barn. You wantin' water?"

"Very much indeed, Bo."

"Dis is once I wanted de dern stuff too, Pard. Dey wasn't so very much water in dem berries."

After a short while more of roads and fields slipping by, Bo drew up into a little lane, where he hid the 'cycle under a great, overhanging hedge. "Come, Johnny, I'll help."

"O Bo, leave me. Just leave me here, and let me die. Better it had been, long years ago, if I had only—"

"Drop dat better-it-had-been stuff, and lean on ol' pal. So. Dat's much better. You ain't goin' to die, Pard." He got John into a barn, and then literally shouldered the man and carried him up to the loft. There he ensconced him in a remote hole under a pile of sweet new hay. A few moments later he had returned from a near-by well with a gourdful of water. John drank his fill, and fell asleep.

In the morning he gave Bo money, saying: "Get to the nearest village as quickly as you can. Get food and quinine. Good-bye."

In the course of an hour, Bo had returned with quinine capsules and a can of peaches for John, as well as with bologna sausage and crackers for himself.

After breakfast and the quinine, John felt much better. In the course of two hours more he left the barn laughing and chatting with Bo, and walking wholly unsupported.

"Better make fer de railroad tracks, Pard," sug-

gested Bo, and this they did, and then walked along the tracks more slowly. Other tramps came by, and Bo gave the customary words of greeting, but, otherwise, he did not affiliate with them. John grew weaker.

They slept in a stack that night, and in the morning, after breakfast and a quinine capsule, John was much better again.

So then they went along the track, Bo singing cheery songs and John listening with keen delight. But in the afternoon John grew much worse. Bo looked back in the direction in which the big swamp lay, and raised his hand, bestowing a devil's benediction on the place. "All my fault, Jacky." "Nobody's fault—just luck, Bo."

The birds sang, the bees rumbled in the bending flowers beside the track, but John grew weaker. "It's all up, Bo dear. It's all up. And I don't dare enter a hospital."

"Come on just a little furder," encouraged Bo. He put an arm behind John. John broke into a fierce chattering chill, even there in the hot afternoon sunshine. Bo made him swallow another capsule, then stripped off his own coat and wrapped the shivering man up in it as tenderly as a mother would bundle her child. Resolutely he offered an optimism which he could not feel. "It's only malaria, my Jacky. 'Tain't swamp fever. I know de symptoms

like I know a bo's mind, an' 'tain't swamp fever. Anyways dere's a hut up in dat wood alongside de track, unless t'ings is mighty changed since last a whole bunch o' bo's slept in it—me 'mongst 'em."

"Help me to it, Bo. I can't even see the track."

From that time on, John knew little. He felt himself walking in a deep darkness, wherein he could touch no ground with his feet, see no objects with his eyes. At times he heard the voice of Bo, miles and miles distant, apparently. "Here we are at de wood, Jacky . . . . Here we are in de hut in de wood, Jacky . . . . Can't no dicks git us now—ever, Jacky," and so on.

Then John appeared again and yet again to see himself back in Duluth. He would mount the bluff by the Golden Stairway. And he would walk to Morning Glory Cottage, knock at the door, be admitted. But always, just at this point, it seemed that a stranger stood before him, a great black giant, who said to him: "My name is Death. I, now, keep this cottage, and they whom you seek, they are both gone, and you shall see them upon this earth no more." Then John would break into moaning and crying and threshing about, till some one, bending over him, would console: "There now, my Jacky, be quiet and get well." So John would come to recognize Bo. Then he would think himself going up the bluff again.

CHAPTER XLII

JEAN'S OWN CATASTROPHE

CHAPTER XLII

Jean's Own Catastrophe

JOHN'S letter to Mr. Proteus had arrived early one morning in Mr. Proteus' waiting-room. Jean, trembling, took it, went and knocked at Mr. Proteus' door. "Is this all my mail?" asked the attorney, as he took the letter. Jean went back to see. There *was* more, a very great pile: letters from other prominent lawyers and from great corporations, even from the mighty U. S. Government itself. But, in Jean's eyes, there had been only one single letter.

"Come in, Jean."

Mr. Proteus opened *the* letter, read it, stood staring.

Then he showed both the check and the letter to Jean. Jean, with blurring eyes, read:

Thank you, dear Mr. Proteus, for all you have done for me—though it can be of no use. The enclosed check will, no doubt, cover both the fee which I owe you and also the losses of my bondsmen. I have written a letter to Miss La Croix, which I will mail hereafter. Then the world that has known me will know me no more. I will continue to live, yet I shall be as a man dead.

I remain

Very gratefully and sincerely yours,

John Gridley Smith.

Jean, dropping check and letter, staggered back to the waiting-room. It was long before Mr. Proteus heard the tapping of her machine again.

John's letter to Jean, that note which he had posted at Hobton, just before setting out for his long tramp over the Nowhere Road, fared worse than his missive to Mr. Proteus. When it arrived in Mr. Proteus' waiting-room, Jean was out at luncheon. Into the hands of Miss Banyard, therefore, the missive fell. By that most loyal person it was promptly, if surreptitiously, opened, then removed to her home and quietly filed away for future use. "Mr. Proteus," she reflected, "has a saying that every scrap of print or writing should be kept forever, inasmuch as it may, at some time, turn into evidence. Anyway, Jean, *you don't get this note.*"

Later, when Miss Banyard fell sick, very sick indeed, she proceeded to burn John's missive.

As the days passed and no letter from John came, Jean got to thinking that John had changed his mind and decided not to mail the letter he had written to her. Poor dear John! She wrote him again, and took the letter to Mr. Proteus, asking for his approval. Mr. Proteus was only too ready to approve. He was even frank enough to admit now that he wished he had not opposed Jean's sending of her earlier note. "I thought all for the best," was his only excuse. "But you see that, in a world like this,

even an ugly lawyer may be mistaken—and a pretty girl right."

Jean's letter explained to John the reasons why she had failed to speak to him on that day when she had been riding with Claud in his automobile. It also explained why she had permitted any sort of attention from Claud. It also made as clear as words could make anything that Mr. Proteus, Mother Margaret and herself believed in John's innocence most fully, that he was much missed and would always be remembered at Morning Glory Cottage, and that Mr. Proteus, Mother Margaret and herself would always hope and pray for his return.

But the letter, addressed to John's old place of business in Granville, came back at the end of thirty days, stamped: "Gone without leaving change of address."

Then Mr. Proteus swore by all the water in the Lake that John should return. He employed a strong detective agency to search for him high and low, likely and unlikely. They so searched. But a very peculiar thing was that these detectives, while never able to find John himself, found still other detectives than those of their own house out hunting for the same man. And never would the second set of detectives tell Mr. Proteus' set of detectives just what they were wanting Mr. John Smith for. Mr. Proteus and his detectives were sadly puzzled in

this matter. Claud could not possibly have had sufficient money to keep up extensive searchings. As for the State—the State had not, as yet, any reason for making a search. It occurred to Mr. Proteus that possibly Jewish friends or relatives of Mr. Polano had wanted to keep track of John so that, eventually, the demands of what they took to be justice, might have a chance to be satisfied. But Mr. Proteus, lawyer-like, saw weak spots in this theory. The friends and relatives of Mr. Polano had no more reason, as yet, for making a search than had the State itself.

Jean, on her part, went about like one in a vague dream.

Then, on a sad gray day, there fell upon her one more great blow. A man named Benson, who lived in Superior, had, it seemed, and quite independently of any effort of Jean's, patented an electric steering-device very similar to hers. She investigated the rumor. That device, she found, not only had clearly antedated her own efforts, but it was really a better, because a much simpler and more practical, affair.

She would not have cared so much about that catastrophe though, if John could only have been found. At all events, the lives of those who went down to the great lakes in ships, would hereafter be more safe. That was the main thing. Honor to Mr. Benson and his service to the world!

She began to devote herself, then, with even greater energy to her tasks in Mr. Proteus' office, and, of mornings, to still greater care and loving watchfulness over Mother Margaret. At all these tasks she continually smiled. She would at least be good for something, she decided, if only for smiling. So she was like newest sunshine to all about her. But, at night, when she had crawled into her restless bed, having let the curtain of her window up, she lay and looked off over the great reaches of the bay and out through the Gateway and so on into the vast world where John was. And she prayed intently that, come weal come woe to herself, John might be forever strong and well and happy—somewhere, somewhere. God bless him and save him from himself.

CHAPTER XLIII

SCOOP-SHOVEL

CHAPTER XLIII

Scoop–Shovel

ONE day John awoke to see a strange face, together with Bo's, leaning over him. "Who's this?" he mumbled. "Doctor Davidson," answered Bo. Then John knew no more.

Again he awoke. Again Doctor Davidson was bending over him.

When he once more awoke, his head had cleared considerably. He found himself lying in a log hut, on a bed of hay, but there were heavy bed-clothes over him, too heavy. Bo lay in the opposite corner, on another hay couch, sound asleep. His features expressed absolute exhaustion.

John slept again, again awoke. Bo was offering him nourishment and medicine. "Bo, tell me all about it. Who is this Doctor Davidson?"

"Lives at the nearest village. I feared you was goin' to die, Jacky. So I told him all I knowed about you. He swore to keep it secret, an' I guess he has. Anyway, you're getting well. I paid Doc with money I found in your coat; likewise I pervided food, covers and medicine. Some coat, Jacky."

John improved rapidly, and soon was, to all seeming, quite as strong as ever. Yet he seemed little

inclined to leave the hut. "Why ever journey again, Bo, into the blue distance? What is the use of 'hitting' the 'Nowhere Road'? God knows we're just as happy here as we can ever be anywhere. And I, dear Bo, just by writing for it, can always get as much money as we want."

Bo did his best to be content. But John could plainly see the great effort which that cost him. Every morning, just before dawn, Bo awakened and listened to the distance-mellowed warnings of an express train, just over there, perhaps a half mile or so away; dreamed with open eyes of new scenes, new people, new customs. Then he would give John some of his choicest travelogs, regale him with tales of the dusty road, "the cinder-path," riding her blind to hades and back, and so on.

Then he would get up, go outside the hut, and march around it—restless, restless—around and around only to return into the hut and to John again.

After dinner, each day, as the hours grew hotter, here would come the innumerable tales, grossly impossible tales, once more: of Bo's most strange life—his imminent perils on the deadly "rods;" of being taken by the insolent brakeman and turned to custody; of his deliverance thence and portance in his travel's joyous history. "Ah, Jacky, I tells you dat it's woith all de troubles an' dust to live outside life—like a god." He regarded the thought of per-

petual wandering and of being seemingly answerable to no man, or institution of men, with a religious ecstasy.

When, at night, the frogs began, over at the margin of a near-by pond, Bo would get more restless even than he had been in the morning.

"What's the matter with you?" John asked of him, one night, irritably.

"It's de dern frogs croakin' dat way," Bo muttered. "I never heard nuttin' so lonesome in my life. Seems like I just can't stan' dis hole anudder minute." He broke off as a distant freight whistled on a long down grade, its mournful, mysterious wail singing to his vagrant heart of places far beyond the horizon.

"O God!" John shuddered and covered his face. "I have a presentiment, Bo, of terrible things to happen to us out yonder on the tracks, if ever we go out walking them again."

"O God nuttin'," dissented Bo with emphasis. "Dere ain't nuttin' out dere on de tracks woise dan ever dey was before. An' listen to de frogs, Pal. Listen to dem blessed frogs: 'Woik, woik, woik!' Dat's what dey sings de livelong night. 'Woik, woik, woik!' I tell you it's terrible, Pal. Fawncy *singin'* about woik!"

John had not especially noticed the singing of the frogs before. He had been too deeply absorbed in thoughts of Duluth. But the frogs *were* singing, and,

in his heart of hearts, he did not much blame Bo for hating to listen, hour after hour, to a song about work. He himself had "soured on" work. He had worked—had worked, he believed, as seldom man had worked before, and, after all, what had he now to show for it all? Honor? A happy life?

He thought, though, that he would tease Bo. "Do you know, Bo, that the frog's voice is the oldest voice in all this world? The first vocal cords on this planet were those of frogs, and the first vocal utterance ever heard was an appeal for service: 'Work, work, work.'"

"Dat ain't no argyment," said Bo. "Dey didn't do a lick demselves." Again he listened for trains.

A distant freight engine sent its mysterious, beckoning hoot across the quiet, sleeping countryside. "God!" Bo shuddered. "W'at a hole! An' de neighbors, dey's bound to find us out soon."

They left that very minute, hit the track, went on a few miles, and then spent the rest of the night in a barn. They took breakfast in a little village, and went on—northward. John, for some mysterious reason, was greatly depressed. But Bo was delighted beyond measure—especially pleased when he saw how strong in body and fully recovered John now was.

Bo was singing a little stanza out of Clem Yore, giving to the words his own queer, affected pronunciation.

"These are the joys of life I prize:
The earth, the wind, the road, the skies;
The call of bird; the grace of flower;
An echo heard at twilight hour.
Give me these and make me wise—
These are the gifts of God I prize."

He added, "and a good pard to walk with."

There had been for some time, in the blue distance of the north, and up the straight track, the figure of a man approaching. This figure was now getting rather near, and John could see that it carried a little bundle fastened to one end of a stick slanted over a shoulder. Bo grew more and more irresponsive to John's remarks, and, at length, when John, wondering at the matter, cast curious eyes on Bo, he observed that the one eye of his travelling companion was gazing ahead at the approaching figure with strange, almost wild, intensity. At length Bo shouted: "Well, I'll be—" But he never said exactly what. He stopped in his tracks—staring, staring. Nearer came the figure. Nearer still.

Then the figure stopped. Bo advanced, both hands widely extended. The newcomer dropped his stick and grasped the hands. Bo asked, "*Is* it?" "It *is*," responded the other. The two kept looking and holding each other's hands.

Then Bo, "Johnny, here's a ol' pal I knowed afore ever I knowed you. Meet Scoop-shovel."

John met Scoop-shovel, did not like him especially, but attempted to say that he did. Scoop-shovel was a slender, raw-boned, villainous-looking, sour-faced fellow, who appeared to be equal to any sort or kind of mischief. Then Bo and Scoop began to reminisce together—from which conversation, very naturally and however unintentionally, John was excluded. He began in time to feel a strong dislike for Scoop-shovel. Bo, however, seemed more and more delighted.

At length and quite abruptly, Scoop said to Bo in a commanding voice: "Right about face, Pal, and into de sout' wit' me." He took a step in that direction.

Bo looked up at John with quick, anxious questioning. "Go wit' us, Johnny?" he asked.

John answered very deliberately. "N-o-o-o. No, I—think I'd better be getting north."

"Johnny's all right, Scoop. He can go wit' us if he wants to, can't he?"

Scoop looked John all over with calm appraisement. At last he said, "Yes, he can if he wants ter." He faced south again.

Bo looked at John for a time, then said: "Johnny, you ain't ever goin' to fergit none o' the good times?"

"No," said John huskily.

"An' you *won't* go along?"

"No. I believe not." John was afraid that now,

if ever, the old adage might prove correct, that two's company and three's none.

Scoop addressed Bo gruffly. "If you like to come with me, come with me. If you want to go on with the long shanks, go on with the long shanks. Do without me if you can."

Bo wavered a moment, John always thought. Then he decided, "Johnny, my boy, you 'n me's been mighty good pals fer a mighty long time. But dis yere Scoop's a man I knowed long afore I knowed you. An' de rule of de road is, dat de pal you've knowed de longest is de one you always sticks ter. Ain't it so, Scoop?"

Scoop having affirmed that this was so, Bo said: "So long, Johnny; we'll meet again." Then he placed himself at Scoop's side. The two struck off together into the south, Bo's husky voice floating back to John with the breeze:

"I had a pal from everywnere,
From everywhere, from everywhere.
We went a-trampin' everywhere,
To everywhere, to everywhere."

John stood for a long time, merely watching. Then, with a long sigh, he moved on north, alone. When he had walked a quarter of a mile, he stopped and looked after Bo and his old-new friend. How little they seemed! Now they were out of sight. He

wondered if he ought not to have accepted Bo's invitation, and formed a trio with these tramps. How terribly lonesome he was! No place to go, no one to whom he could speak—not even a dog.

He went on for six or seven miles, and then, unable to endure the solitude and the hopeless prospects of his weary life any further, he faced abruptly about and walked swiftly after Bo and his gruff-voiced companion.

CHAPTER XLIV

TWO WANDERERS GO HOME

CHAPTER XLIV

Two Wanderers Go Home

NOT that night, however, did he overhaul the tramps. He slept in a straw stack, and, at earliest dawn, he was on the trail again. At length he came to a little station named Grootville, which he and Bo had passed two days before. He believed he had better risk speaking to the station agent about Bo and his friend, inasmuch as otherwise he should be running the risk of going beyond them, and then of never finding them again. Tramps have no post office addresses.

He dusted his clothes as well as he could, and, having approached the sublime being behind the ticket-office window, propounded his question. The sublime being responded by asking a question himself: "You tramp too?" "Yes." "Friend of these people?" "Yes." "Then you'll find them in the North Graveyard, potter's field."

Further questioning failed to elicit further information.

John, thereupon, passing into the business part of the village, entered a barber shop. As he sat in the big chair, he heard the gossips still running on about the terrible disaster which, two days before,

had overtaken a pair of tramps that had ridden the rods under "forty-seven."

John tremulously asked for a description of the men, got it, knew the victims for Bo and his lean friend. With a throbbing heart he hired one of the loafing boys to take him to the burying-ground. There he was shown the double grave. "Did you know either of them tramps, Mister? You ain't cryin'? Why, they was jest— Well, maybe *you* are too."

John went down to the track, and turning northward, began "slinging the feet" again.

CHAPTER XLV

JEAN PITIES CLAUD

CHAPTER XLV

Jean Pities Claud

MISS MAGNOLIA BANYARD had begun to lose her fat. That was the first change noticed by her friends. Then she acquired an enormous appetite and thirst, and ate five meals *per diem*, large ones, and began to enrich the soda fountain people materially. And still she continued to lose weight. At first all her fleshy friends envied her. What was the great secret of Miss Banyard's rapid reduction of flesh, even while she increased, rather than diminished, her supplies of every sort and kind of delicious viand? The friends begged her for the secret, asking only the name of her physician.

Miss Banyard, however, only smiled knowingly. She had not lived in a lawyer's office for more than seventeen years without acquiring some insight into what is popularly known as "bluff." So she just smiled knowingly. One day, she could not see very well out of her left eye. Everything she looked at with that organ appeared to be fiery red. So she consulted both Dr. Tilderquist and Dr. Winter, highly skilled oculists. The eye greatly improved. Then she had a terrific headache, and so she went to the internist in The Arrowhead Clinic, and came out

saddened beyond measure. At that time it was that she burned the letter from John to Jean.

Later, she became even sadder still. Miss Magnolia Banyard was going to die.

The first thing she did in her extremity was to write an interminably long love-letter to John Smith. But when she learned from Mr. Proteus that John's address was not available even to his own attorney, she tore the letter to bits and changed doctors again.

But it all made little difference in the condition of Miss Banyard. The trouble with her was, as one of her more jocose internists put it, that she was "too sweet"—in other words, that she had diabetes. More than that, she had let the disease run on so very long unchecked, that now she had acquired albuminuria into the bargain and a number of other terrible conditions with goodness knows what awful Latin and Greek names.

Then she suddenly grew very unselfish, set aside each month a very perceptible allowance for the poor. Miss Banyard had seldom given a thought to the poor before, but now she was suddenly faced with the necessity of doing something to insure her own personal admission to the kingdom of heaven. So she became considerate of the poor.

Her eye got well, but her diabetes ran on. And the longer it ran and the more swiftly, the kinder and more considerate became Miss Banyard to all about

her. To Jean she even hinted at terrible things in her past—things which she hoped that God, at least, would be able to forget. She burst into tears, and hoped Jean and Claud would be happy. "He loves you very well indeed, Jean dear," she would constantly wind up. "Maybe he didn't always, but he does now."

And, truly enough and strangely enough, Claud did love Jean. Time had been when he had looked upon her with smouldering and bloodshot eyes—eyes that had made her tremble and draw back from him. But now a great change had, somehow, worked in Claud. He began to tell her in very much detail, there in the occasionally empty waiting-room, or standing on the verge of the bluff overlooking Duluth, that his life had not been wholly what a true man would have made it. He had not before realized, he admitted, the full extent and wickedness of all that he had done. Sometimes, he declared, his heart was a hollow, burning cavern, gnawing with a great fire of emptiness.

Then he would talk about love and Red George and Miss Banyard. These came to be his three almost constant topics of conversation. What a man was Red George! The thumb of his right hand was missing; had she ever noticed that? No, she had never seen Red George. Well, that was a souvenir of George's novitiate in ladling "soup." By the bye,

Red George had been born on Lake Superior. Had Jean known that? No, she had never known it. Jean hoped that Claud, in some of these moods, would make a great confession exonerating John. But he never did.

He came the nearest to doing that when he talked about Miss Banyard. The man's too sensitive organism seemed to be filled with an inexpressible horror whenever he saw or thought of this erstwhile fleshy woman melting and shriveling away before the very eyes of her companions. Had she died like that [he snapped his fingers] then not so bad. Yet, even in his horror at the sight of slow-approaching death in Miss Banyard, he never reached the point where he would tell (supposing that he could) what had become of John. Nor would he give Jean even a clue to his own or anyone else's connection with the murder.

Two or three times Jean tried to lead him over the verge of reticence and into confession. It was all for John's sake, she mused, exculpatingly. But, on these occasions, Claud cleverly drew back from the precipice—if precipice there were—before him, and, strangely enough, gone to talking of love.

Then Jean began to pity Claud, to feel for him a kind of maternal affection. He seemed so lonely and supersensitive, and, as it were, lost on the great lake of life. They even quarreled a little and made up.

He began to tell her about his old flames, and she grew decidedly interested. She felt, sometimes, toward Claud as if she had been an older sister of his —although she was younger than he by a year or two.

Then, one day, Claud's actual sister, Henrietta, came running, all redness and excitement, into Mr. Proteus' private office, with a little hard-gripped parcel in her hands. Jean was promptly called into close conference with those two, and, from that day forth, Jean looked more kindly than ever on the super-affectionate Claud. But Claud, for the present at least, was not to know about the packet.

CHAPTER XLVI

SERVICE, LORD

CHAPTER XLVI

Service, Lord

THE same afternoon that John saw the grave of Bo and Scoop-shovel, he came, dusty and weary with wandering, to a little country church, not far from the track and facing a highway. He had noted the place before when walking with Bo and again when coming back to overtake him, but had forgotten the spot until now. The sight accorded with his present mood of sadness and bitterness at all the deep irony of life. He crossed the intervening right of way and a little green pasture ground, and leaned against the low white fence. Thirty or forty stones, all told, recounted briefly the tales of just so many lives.

Singing came from the church. "Rock of Ages!" It was a song that always had held him powerfully, and he went up nearer the church, at length sitting down with his back against the trunk of a great elm. There, under the shade, he listened, enchanted, to the solemn and sublime music. A funeral, no doubt.

After a time some one emerged from the front door of the building, and stood about for a moment with his hat off. Then came the coffin, borne by the pall-

bearers, stalwart young countrymen, all of them. Then a little crowd: perhaps, all told, twenty or twenty-five persons.

There was a new-dug grave in the churchyard, as John now noticed for the first time, and therein the coffin was let down. Words were spoken solemnly, a song was sung, then a short prayer was made by some one not much used to praying. And all was over. Nearly all the crowd left immediately. Another useless life had come to an end. Why had a mother ever given birth to it? What a world! Heigh-ho!

He rose to his feet, preparatory to moving down to the track. As he did so, a youth came out of the churchyard, climbing the fence, after the manner of young men everywhere, rather than walk a dozen yards around by the gate. He sauntered solemnly up to John.

"Know him?" He almost whispered.

"No," said John. "A stranger in these parts. What was his name?" He did not really care to know it.

"The Reverend Coulter. A great man he was. Good one, too. Everybody says he was the best man he ever knowed. Great man an' good one. Had a way of sayin', always, that the best thing in the world was service. Couldn't preach a sermon but he brought in the text, 'He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.' 'Christ,' says he, 'has rendered

the greatest of all services ever rendered to mankind: whereby (among other ways) we may know him to have been Christ.'"

When the undertaker and the sexton had finished with the grave and gone, the two men went to the fence, and leaned upon it, looking at the new grave.

The place, somehow, held for John a terrible fascination. Death had always troubled him sorely, and, since the death of his father and mother, it had been in the background of his thoughts. "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" He knew the answer well enough, but the question arose, and had arisen yet again and again. He was deeply distressed about the unknown minister, the keynote of whose life had been Jean's great word, "service."

He turned and looked at the young man's face again. It was covered with tears.

John started to move away, but the young man was again speaking, in a thick, broken voice. " 'Service,' he preached, always; and 'service' he lived too. I can see him now, livin' it. Wherever anybody was in trouble, there *he* was, helpin', helpin', helpin'. I never see no other man help so much. Little things an' big things, always helpin'. Seemed like he couldn't help but help. A big epidemic of typhord came through. *I* got it. Nurses all sick. *He* come an' nursed me. Wouldn't take no pay. 'Pleasure to help,' says he, 'an' I have my salary.' Then my brother got it. *Him*

an' me nursed by turns. Brother got well an' moved to Texas. After awhile *he* got it himself. Here, now, he is."

John gave the grief-stricken boy a gentle pat on the shoulder, moved slowly down to the railroad track, and then strode mightily away. Mile after mile, mile after mile, on the meaningless, the objectless, journey. Heigh-ho! Such a journey was life, everybody's life. That is, so far as this world is concerned.

When night had fallen, he sat on a pile of old ties and munched his cheese and crackers, afterwards looking round about the fields for a likely hay- or straw-stack.

But, though the fields presented many eligible stacks, he did not settle upon any one of them. After a little restless pacing to and fro, he turned his face squarely into the way whereby he had come, and began to retrace the miles—all those weary, weary worthless miles—until he had come again to the little church and its graveyard.

Then he went and stood by the grave, taking his hat off as he did so. Stood so long, so long—he did not know how long. And still he stood. The moon arose, and morning was near. Still he stood.

Part of the time he tried to remember the dead man's name, but, for some reason, could not. He could recall only the word, "service"—the keynote of

the dead man's life. "Service, service!" He even began to think, somehow, that the man had been known as the Reverend Service. He also imagined the dead one standing before his maker, even at that very hour, pleading, in extenuation for all his sins, just one, single word—"Service! Service, Lord! Service!"

He imagined that this man whom he had never seen had never tried to know himself, that all his wisdom had lain in not desiring wisdom, in not trying to impose his will upon the world, or upon God, to be learned, or rich, or eminent, or powerful, or diplomatic, or intrigueing, but only—to give service.

After a time there was no sadness in his thought. A great peace seemed to be ascending from the earth. He believed that God had accepted the two pleading syllables of the dead man's prayer—Service. "He that is greatest among you—"

CHAPTER XLVII
THE EX-IDEALIST

CHAPTER XLVII

The Ex-Idealist

JOHN left the grave as the sun arose, and once more set his face in the original direction.

He believed he would stop off at the very next farmhouse, and work—not just for one or two days and merely to change the current of his thoughts, but long enough to be of real help, to assist somebody mightily. He possessed a little knowledge of carpentering, acquired from his father, and he had two or three times in boyhood gone out into the country and helped a farmer with his crops. He would help—ah! he would just help at the humblest little farmhouse that he could find in the course of a whole day's walk. Poor old Daddy! He recalled that his mother had told him that, when he himself had been an infant, his father had been extremely sickly and extremely poor. What a struggle they had had for existence! That was when her first gray hairs had come. After that the white had appeared very thickly. She had hinted at certain sacrifices which Daddy and she had had to make then, but would never tell John what they had been. Ah, poor old Daddy! He could not help Daddy now, but, at the first poor shack of a farmhouse, he would show the

people what real help was. If only some kind person had been willing to help his own Daddy and Momsie, maybe that sacrifice of which Momsie had spoken, and which had started her hair to graying so fast, would never have had to be.

He was hungry, and, seeing at a little distance "three or four steeples" peeping up from amid green trees, remembered the words of Bo, and turned his face in their direction.

Arrived at the railroad tracks again with a lunch of cheese, crackers and Bologna sausage, he took his seat on a little grassy embankment and began slowly to eat. After a time he commenced, very idly, to read the headlines of the newspaper in which his luncheon had been wrapped. All at once his heart leaped into his throat. He saw, "John Smith, Well Known Former Business Man, Called Jestingly Duke of Duluth, Now in this Section of Country." Then followed, with numerous additions and fearfully untrue elaborations an account of all John's alleged past. According to this lurid sheet, his life had been one long succession either of failures or of gross brutalities and murders. He had starved his help in the laundry. He had tortured a dog to death. He had beaten a little girl into insensibility. He had burnt a building down to get the insurance. He and a much older tramp had robbed a considerable number of persons, also three banks and six churches. And so

on. A fairly accurate description of his person followed, together with his picture, two columns wide, and then a request to the public to assist in every possible way in the capture of this detestably bad man.

John tore the paper into bits, remained in hiding until night, then struck off into the west as fast as his feet would carry him. Night after night he strode.

When he reached the Mississippi, he crossed it on a ferry-boat with his hat pulled down. Then he became bolder, got shaved, bought and put on a new suit of clothes, and took a Pullman stateroom for St. Louis. There he changed for St. Paul. Here, once again, merely glancing at a map, he went and bought a ticket to Wilmington, Montana. Two days later he was walking again, having left the train just a station or two before it had reached Wilmington.

At first he had turned south, but, finding the country growing rougher as he went on, he changed his course to due west, and soon beheld the sublimely jagged outlines of the Rocky Mountains. Then he went north—why, he knew not.

And now there came upon him the bitterest mood he had ever known. His association with Bo had, for a time at least, softened him, for Bo had given him in fullest measure (and well disguised, as masculine natures require) that queer narcotic drug, sympathy. And Bo's death had softened him and

disembittered him still further. Yet again, his bitterness and misanthropy had been reduced by the story of the Reverend Coulter—that story which he had heard with tears in the little country churchyard. But the lies which he had read about himself, the very next day, in that piece of country newspaper, had brought back into his soul all its former bitterness and wild venom— all the hatred and red dreams of revenge which had filled it before he had met Bo.

Only now his bitterness increased each day, and his dreams of revenge became not so much mere dreams as iron intents. What outrages had he not suffered! He had never injured anybody in all his life, but had prospered many, many others besides himself. And what a return had fate rendered! Tears of self-pity. He gave himself up to the darkest broodings on revenge.

He decided, at length, that just so soon as he could think of a way to do it, he would take a full, adequate and complete revenge on the author of all his troubles. Thus far, he had not been able to think out any practical method whereby revenge could be taken. If he went back to Duluth, he would almost certainly be recognized at once, howsoever thoroughly disguised, then apprehended, summarily tried, and sent to the penitentiary for life. There, housed up in inexorable steel and stone, how should he take revenge? A plan would come; no fear of that. He

would just keep thinking. And not only should the immediate author of the outrage against him be made to pay full measure of expiation, crammed down and running over, but all who were in the least degree connected with his undoing should eat the bread of affliction and wash it down with the salty draughts of pain. He was a kind, forgiving man by nature, he reflected, but this dirty business was unforgivable. Claud had not merely killed a harmless old man, and then caused the blame to be laid at John's door. He had done far worse. He had stolen away Jean from him—stolen away not only his life, but his life's happiness—her who should have been his wife, also all the blessed children he might have had by her. Could anything have exceeded such wrong? Should so much injury and guilt be forgiven? Not by a long shot.

As soon as he could think of a plan— But he could not think of a plan. Especially of nights, in barns or haystacks or old ruined houses, he would attempt to think. But thinking brought no clear vision of any way whereby justice could be secured upon his adversaries. The attempt to think, to devise, to plot, merely made his head weary. He would sink into troubled sleep, out of which he would awaken, shouting: "Let me get the blood off my hands." Then he would realize his situation and mumble: "There *will* be red on these hands some day, and without any

risk to myself either. Steady, boy. Be quiet and only think."

But still he could not think. The more he attempted to plan, the stupider and duller he became. It is one of the few blessed things about hatred and the mood of revenge, that it often robs a man of the very ability to form the plots which he thinks he needs.

So John, kindest hearted of men, went wandering round the country, vainly seeking inspiration for a a plot—a plot that should be blacker than his own despair, and yet practicable too. Round and round and round again, he walked. Sometimes he became half conscious of the fact that, like a man lost in a wood, he was roving in an ever-repeated circle. He was also, at times, conscious of a nameless, hopeless, crumpling sensation, somewhere in the depths of his brain.

If he only could get rid of this stupidity! He did not seem to realize that the stupidity grew out of the very thing he wanted to do.

He was walking along a country road one day, muttering, sighing, almost cursing, to himself, when he thought that he heard a woman cry out in anguish and fear. He looked all about, but at first could see nobody. Going a little farther, he beheld a large, two-story house and an even ampler barn. The barn had once been red, and the house white. In several

windows of the house, old hats and rags had been stuffed through holes in the panes.

Presently there issued from the house a large, fleshy young man, with his hands in his pockets and his head well down. Turning back at the gate, he went into the barn. A few moments later, he issued thence in an old, battered automobile, and sped away, apparently for town.

CHAPTER XLVIII
THE BILBOS

CHAPTER XLVIII

The Bilbos

JOHN looked all about the place, but could see no sign of a woman. Not even a flower was growing in the yard. He trudged on after the automobile. But, a little later, he felt very strangely tired, and sat down beside a watering trough to rest. The sight of the drear, unpainted house and barn had depressed him thoroughly. He began to be aware of a mother hen, with one yellow chick, squawking and scratching near by. Presently the hen, in a wet place by the trough, dug out a worm, called her chick with a prodigious cackling—and ate the worm herself. "Way of the world!" muttered John.

He felt so weary and stupid that, when he reached the near-by town, he went and hired a room in its one hotel, paying for it a day in advance. After dinner he went and sat on the porch, canting himself back against the wall of the building in his chair. So postured, he observed the drear, drab life of the little Montana village.

Other men sat on the porch or stood about, and from time to time, stared straight at him. He knew it was dangerous, thus to show himself in public in a country place. But his soul was so desolate that he

believed himself just now indifferent to any destiny. Men spoke to one another out of the corners of their mouths without removing their eyes from him. Still, he knew small town character well enough to understand that this might be merely the result of his being a seedy-looking stranger who showed no inclination to commingle with his fellows.

The talk did not interest him much. It was all about the harvest, the rapidly ripening spring wheat (a veritable bumper crop too) and the difficulty of securing help to get the crop in. Then, soon after, the corn harvest would be coming on. Then there was the second crop of hay—they needed help for that hay even now, the farmers. And how in heaven's name were they ever going to get it.

In the midst of the twaddle and murmur, an uproarious crew came rushing out of the front doorway—laughing, shouting, cursing violently. Among them was the fat young man who had come to town in the automobile. Some one, it seemed, had just defeated this useless hulks at poker, taken all his cash. The cheeks of the party were flushed with liquor and excitement, and, in the face of the young man, was an ugly scowl both of defiance and despair.

"Where you goin' now, Eddy Bilbo?" some one asked of the young man.

"Home."

"You can't get no more money from your mother."

"No, but I got to sleep some. I was up all night over to Bedford in a game, an' I got to sleep a little more before I come back here. I'll get some more money somehow, an' I'll beat you yet." He stepped off the veranda, and started for his automobile.

A strange impulse seized John. He straightened his chair, rose and followed Eddy.

Reaching the machine just as Eddy did, he asked: "May I ride with you?"

"Aw, go to sulphur."

John took his seat beside Eddy, and placidly remarked: "That's why I wanted to ride with *you*, my bucko."

"Lookin' for a job?"

"Yes."

Eddy was suddenly delighted. "Mighty short-handed—Mother and me, and we'll be glad to have you." After a moment, "I'm not very well, and Mother does most of the work. Father's dead."

"You two live alone?"

"Yep." Eddy rattled on about the approaching harvest and the difficulty of getting good help until they reached the weather-beaten house and barn again.

When they had entered the house, Eddy marched all through the rooms, shouting: "Mother! Are you there, Mother? Why in hades don't you answer, when you knowed I was comin'?" Seized by a sudden

thought, he went to the back door. "Mowin' hay again," he cried backward to John. "The blankedest woman I ever see. I try to keep her from workin', but work she will." He put his hands to his mouth. "Mother!" he shouted. "I got a new hand for you, and he wants supper. Come on an' get supper."

CHAPTER XLIX

INVESTED LIVES

CHAPTER XLIX

Invested Lives

HE THEN returned to the front room and threw himself on a ragged couch, closing his eyes and passing into silence if not sleep.

When "Mother" arrived—a sweet-faced woman of forty-five or fifty, a little under middle height, a little stooped, and in calico dress and sunbonnet—John rushed to help her with the evening meal. His help was refused, but he would not take No for an answer. Before the meal was ready, John and she had got well acquainted and John had been employed as her farm-hand at so much per month.

Eddy awoke just as the meal had become an accomplished fact, and after supper, when John went forth to the fields, there to continue the mowing in Mother Bilbo's place, Eddy was still at the table, eating and eating. "No doubt," thought John, "he is trying to recover his health in what my cousin would probably designate as 'the easiest way.'"

In the morning, John was up betimes and in the fields again. Eddy, arising later, had no doubt a good hot breakfast, and after a scene with his mother (whereof John caught but tiny fragments when he had come to the house for a drink) he rode away to town again.

John took a very great pleasure all that forenoon, as he passed round the field, in figuring out a cure for Eddy's "sickness." Yet, when he got back to the house, he was so regaled by Mother Bilbo with stories of the wonderful accomplishments and abilities of her "little sweet Eddy," that he had then no heart to thresh this detestable young scoundrel. Greater pain it would have given to the little mother than to the big hulks of a culprit.

"He ain't so bad," Mother went on. "Eddy he ain't so bad. The neighbors all say he's bad, but I can't see him that way. He's young and foolish, but he ain't jest to say b-a-d."

"Drink?"

"A little." Flushes on her cheeks.

"Gamble?"

"A little." Flushes growing deeper.

"Work much?"

"No. But then Eddy ain't in very good health." With unconscious self-contradiction, she continued: "I don't know where he gets it, Eddy, this lazin' aroun' so. He didn't never get it from his father. His father was the workin'est man ever I see. That's how we come to get this place. Started with nothin', Pa an' me did. But work! Up early an' down late. An' so—

"An' this *was* a place when Pa was alive."

"I can see the traces still," confessed John.

Mother being silent for a long time, John added: "I believe I will just stick round a good while, if you'll let me, Mother, and help build the place up again."

"If I'll *let* you? I'll *let* you. Go ahead an' do what you like with the place, Mr. Smith. It needs a stronger hand and a stronger brain than mine to run it. You go ahead."

John went ahead. Here was a definite task before him, and he rose to it. At the very same time, much of the bitterness went out of him. And he not only looked after the crops, but he repaired the old house with his own hands, built a new front porch, and painted the entire structure and the barn.

Then, one day, Mother revealed a secret to him. The place was heavily mortgaged, the mortgage was overdue, and soon a hard-fisted, money-lending neighbor would take the farm in. "No use to ask for any more extensions," Mother wound up. "Already refused."

"I have," said John, "a friend in the East who will lend us the money." He wrote to Mr. Von Bulow, received the cash by express, paid the mortgage off, and took Mother Bilbo's note in Mr. Von Bulow's name.

The crops were a great success that year, and the next and the next and the next. Eddy helped occasionally. Sometimes for months and months he

refrained from dissolute ways, encouraged by John's industrious and kindly example. Then he seemed like a wholly different person from the man that John first had known; Mother Bilbo wept for joy. But always and eventually, after a little period of restlessness and idling about the farm, Eddy got up and was "off the trail" again. Then Mother Bilbo's heart would seem to break—she had got to expecting so much more from her son than she had ever expected before.

But if Eddy would always again become dissolute, he would, too, always reform. He used, as he worked by John's side, to say again and again: "It's will I lack. I know I'm a skunk. I don't deserve no such mother like I got nor no such friend as you be. I need the will. I need the *will*." Then, one day, after a week of terrible dissipation and a fight which almost landed the gentleman in the penitentiary, he observed to John: "If I could just have a real good kickin', sometimes I believe it'd help me. I mean when I'm just a-itchin' to go mean."

John treasured the saying in his heart. It seemed to him a peerless piece of wisdom, though it had come from the mouth of a fool, and though he did not know whether, because of Mother Bilbo, he should ever be able to act upon it.

The pot boiled over a few weeks after that. John had plowed and harrowed and sowed and reaped in

the meantime. So, too, had Eddy. All was going very well, and then one day John took to town with him a check of Mother Bilbo's, and,when he returned, he held the note to Mr. Von Bulow (which document had been quietly resting all the while in his safety drawer at the Bedford bank) in the palm of his hard brown hand. It was stamped "Paid."

John showed the note to Eddy before surrendering it to Mother Bilbo. And when he beheld the happiness which his service to these people had given them, he walked away and into the big, well-kept barn to hide his tears.

Then he went to mending harness, and after a time was joined by Eddy. Eddy stood about for a while, restless, pacing to and fro, hands in pockets or picking at his hot lips. At length he said, "Say, Jacky, couldn't let me have a sawbuck, could you? I want to celebrate."

John cleaned up the long-wished-for job.

Mother was out in the hen-shed at the time, and John helped the well threshed Eddy indoors and to his bed. "Remember," was John's final admonition. "Whenever you get restless, I'm going to thresh you." Eddy groaned. Then, pulling his swollen lips apart with a big fat hand, he murmured: "Thanks."

BOOK V
THE WATER-CARRIERS

CHAPTER L

A MESSAGE FROM THE UNSALTED SEA

CHAPTER L

A Message from the Unsalted Sea

ONE year later, Eddy was still "in the straight and narrow," as he called it. John was, on a certain hour, out in the bench field—i.e., a field which rose abruptly out of the main field, just like a six-foot bench. The weather had been dry, and the young grain was shriveling in the intense heat. Water—if they only had a little water. John looked off into the East, wishing for water so hard that he seemed to form a kind of vacuum within his being.

Water or no water, he had made a great change in this farm, also an enormous alteration in two human lives. That, at least, was something. Mother Bilbo, dear old lady, had seemed, somehow, to take the place to him now-a-days of both his father and his mother. And Eddy—he had really come to love Eddy like a brother. Dear big fat chap, Eddy actually had a heart of gold.

And how happy John had been since he had clearly perceived that he was accomplishing these things! How stupid and dull he had grown in the days before he had stumbled and blundered on this place! How filled with thoughts of revenge against his cousin—that black being whose crime still threw a shadow

over John's innocent life! As he remembered Jean again, and all the happiness which he might have had in life by her side, his hatred began to burn once more hotly. But he forthwith put out the flame. "I should be more foolish than Eddy ever has been," he said to himself, "should I dissipate my little powers with dreams and illusions of revenge."

Hearing a step behind him, John turned. And there was Eddy. "Viewing the desolation, John?"

"Not desolation yet. Don't despair."

Eddy came closer up, and brushed an extra heavy patch of dust off John's coat sleeve. John understood. That was the way some men have of petting without seeming to do so.

As Eddy kept on dusting, he observed, although somewhat incidentally: "I just want to tell you, John, that it's one year one month this day, since you put the will-power into me. *And it's there yet.*"

"It may rain before night," observed John.

"Rain or no rain, *I'm safe.* Disappointment can't hurt me now—nor joy nor nuthin'.

"And I just want to say that—" His voice broke badly. "I say—that Mother and me—is mightily obliged to you—all you've done—"

He rushed away, pell-mell, to keep from crying.

Now John kept looking in the other direction—toward the East, toward Duluth. That was the way in which a rain should come, if at all.

After a time he put his hand up to his forehead, and cried aloud. Eddy, watching at a little distance, saw him stagger, and almost fall.

Then he saw him turn and look at the house. Then turn and look into the East once more. Then turn and look at the house again.

Now he was coming toward the house. And Eddy, as he beheld him, believed that his face was transfigured—just as he had once heard a country preacher declare that the faces of the olden prophets had become transfigured whenever they had seen a glorious vision.

CHAPTER LI
THE OLD DUCAL DOMAIN

CHAPTER LI

The Old Ducal Domain

JOHN was on "The Northern" now, watching the fields swim past. He had hurriedly said "Goodbye" to the Bilbos, and, packing his things, motored, together with Eddy, like mad to the Bedford station. Eddy, back at the farm, was still, no doubt, exchanging surmises with Mother Bilbo as to the probable cause of John's precipitate departure. What a mystery, John reflected, he must always have been to the Bilbos, even from the very beginning of his stay with them. He had never told them much about himself—just sufficient to mislead. This, he thought, was justified, under the circumstances. And now he had explained that he had had a sudden business call from far away east, that he must go immediately, but that, if he could, he would soon return to them—at least for a very long visit. And that was all he had told them.

Mother had said, with tears in her eyes: "You're sick and going to take an operation." John had merely smiled. Let her think that, if she would. Far better.

But John had had a vision. Eddy was quite right about that—a vision. He had been in Bedford, the

day before, seeking in the public library for information on a new variety of wheat calculated to withstand much drought. And then, as it happened, while he was running his fingers rapidly through the catalog, he had come upon the names of many a Duluth writer—Charles Nelson Pace, Julius H. Barnes, Margaret Culkin Banning, Claude Washburn, Thomas D. Whittles, and numerous others, whose very names had turned back his thoughts and heart to the beautiful city by the unsalted sea. So he had been quite in a proper frame of mind for seeing visions. And the vision had been, although about Duluth, a very bright and happy one.

John, that is to say, as he had been standing in the dry bench field, looking off toward Duluth, had suddenly seen, coming up over the horizon, a peculiar bank of solid-looking cloud. It had arisen about so high, and then stopped. It had been a great, trap-colored bank, like an immense stone bluff: with the smell of sweet water all about it, and with an airy city built upon it, wall heaped on wall, full of bell-voiced churches, and with a border about its base of lighted, slowly moving ships. And everywhere were the feel of old romance and the thoughts of illimitable service —gifts of the great unsalted Lake.

Then, borne by another layer of the atmosphere, there had come up over the bluff of cloud an army of Mr. Proteus' water-carriers. O good, gigantic,

serviceable people out of Lake Superior! For how many thousands of years had you not been coming, going, returning again; and always with your faces of eternal youth and rapturous helpfulness! How welcome to eyes tired with watching for the rain, and filled with fear of drouth and failure! There they had moved, just as distinctly as on that day when John, for the first time in Mr. Proteus' office, had watched them, listening the while to Mr. Proteus' wide-eyed rhapsody. "Do you not see them?" Mr. Proteus had demanded. "I can behold them as plainly as if they were steel engravings. *There's* one of them, far in advance, a great cloud-giant with a vast bucket of water in each hand. Farther behind, there are scores of them. And they're just beginning to rise from the Lake with their buckets. A whole vast procession, a mighty caravan of *aquarii*, headed due west, or southwest, or northwest. Off for the long trip! Off for the thirsting fields! There they go, with wheat and oats and corn and barley in their hands, and big forest trees, and pleasant summer flowers to be plucked by little children—"

John had remembered too, all at once, the day he had come to the Bilbos with black hate in his heart, and nothing but sheer dullness in his brain as a very natural consequence. A great wave of shame had then rolled through his being. But a moment afterward, he had thought with pleasure of

the brightness and good cheer which he had brought to the Bilbos. How much better it had been than mere aimless and hate-filled wandering. He had rendered service to these people. And one of the most curious things about service—good, honest and lasting service to others than yourself—was that it purified and exalted your own spirit, thereby made you better able to think out your own problems—and all men have their problems, either great or small.

Then, in the bright illumination of his spirit, there had seemed to come to him, clearly, yet from far, very far away—over there in the direction of that city-builded bluff—a little voice: he was not altogether certain that it had not been Jean's voice. And the voice had seemed to say to him, "Show them. Lift away the veil that keeps them from seeing."

And all at once he had formed THE PLAN.

The strangest thing of all was that he had never conceived this plan before. So simple, so absolutely certain—he then had thought—and so clearly and supremely approvable, because of its sheer logical perfection, at any time and anywhere.

John, for a moment, so bewildered he was with the startling simplicity and practicality of his great idea, knew not what to do. He felt himself to be awake, yet, at the same time, to be wandering in a curious,

disconcerting, dream. Even the tiniest details and elements of his life appeared, all at once, to have broken up their former associations and relationships, and to have re-arranged themselves in some bright and beautiful pattern imposed upon them by the all-compelling force of this great new idea.

He knew that Eddy, standing at a little distance, was watching him. He also understood that he himself was looking first at Mother Bilbo's house then at the great trap-colored bluff in the east and the water-carriers that came rising above it.

Finally he had fully awakened, and strode to the house.

Before midnight, as it happened, and while he was still packing his things, enormous buckets seemed to have inverted in the sky, and tons of water appeared to be descending into the fields—the fields that roared and howled with thirsty joy, echoing the booming cries of the giant water-carriers up above. Mr. Proteus' good old water-carriers, all the way from Gitchee Gumee! He heard again, in the thunder of the many voices, the syllables of Mr. Proteus: "There they go, with wheat and oats and corn and barley in their hands, and big forest trees, and pleasant summer flowers to be plucked by little children."

He had not been able to sleep one wink that night, because of the ecstatic voices of the earth and of old Gitchee Gumee's water-carriers.

And now he was actually on the train headed for Gitchee Gumee and Duluth!

He was not altogether certain, though, that his plan would seem so simple and practical to Mr. Proteus as it did to him, John Smith. He would have to submit it, as a matter of course, to Mr. Proteus. And, without Mr. Proteus' approval, the whole scheme would fall to the ground. Would Mr. Proteus give his approval?

He thought of Jean, and it seemed as if the approval of Mr. Proteus were an assured fact, the result of mere natural law and necessity. But, as he thought of Mr. Proteus again, he felt as if the world were slipping, slipping away from him. This feeling, sometimes, was like a madness.

But ever his courage was kept up by the sights he saw along the way—this magnificent country "tributary" to Duluth. Look yonder, and yonder again! Great trains loaded with close-packed grain! In a short time—one could scarcely say how short, these days—all those mighty tons of wheat would be upon ships, and the great cries of the ships would go out before them through the iron gateway: "Lo, world! Lo, what I bring you, world!"

An old man came and sat by John, and John spoke to him about the beauty of the clouds—pointing, all the while, out of window at this cloud and that, as if the beauty of cumulus and rain-bank had been his

own great, overwhelming discovery. "Nothing in the world is so beautiful as clouds after months of monotonous, steel-blue, empty skies, nothing more refreshing than the feel of rain in the air after the oven heat of the long dry spell, nor anything more full of poetry, and a very foretaste of Elysium—"

"Yes," interrupted the old man. "It used to make me feel that way too, whenever I drinked it." He rose, and went and sat in the far end of the car.

Then John's spirits sank again. Rose again. Again sank.

What had become of Jean now? What right had he to suppose that Jean would be glad to see him, even if she were still unmarried? Had she not refused once, twice, to speak to him in the street—to him, the common criminal, at least a man that had been accused of serious crime? Then he could not help feeling that, in all this fear of his, there must be some mistake. Jean *would* be glad to see him. If not, he, after clearing himself (if he *could* clear himself) would court her most manfully, win her in spite of any prejudice which she might ever have formed against him. She had loved him once—of that he felt quite sure. On the other hand, she might be married. Yes, she probably was married, and to Claud. Perchance she was dead. He had dreamed, once, in his wanderings, that, back in Duluth, he had gone up to Morning Glory Cottage, and, entering, been met,

not by Jean, but by a gigantic figure which announced itself as Death's very person. Had that meant anything? He was not superstitious, but, in his present condition of mind, he could not help asking the question, and the more he asked it the more depressed and dejected he became.

At last, one day—the car windows were dancing before his eyes!—he was "pulling" into Duluth.

Soon he smelt again the sweet waters of the Lake. Saw the white gulls flying over them. Heard the big ships lo-ing to the world. Saw—but did not heed—the terraced bluff. Saw, but did not heed, because he was making straight for Mr. Proteus' office. There was a firm conviction in his heart, like unto the rock on which the city rested. He *must* not fail, and he *could* not.

CHAPTER LII

WE ARE NOT SO PROMINENT AS WE THINK

CHAPTER LII

We are Not So Prominent as We Think

BUT when he arrived at Mr. Proteus' office, the office was closed for the day. Nothing better to do, then, than to get a room in some hotel, and so to wait and hope that he would remain unrecognized. He believed it would be better to keep fairly well hidden, yet he went again, perhaps out of habit, to the Iron Range Hotel.

He had half consciously expected the city, as soon as he arrived, to rise like one single man, and to shout at him: "It is he! There he is—the murderer!" But no one seemed to notice him at all—even yet. He saw at a very little distance, down one of the corridors, the porter who had been working in the hotel that day whereon he had been accused of crime. Out of uncontrollable curiosity, he went up closer, just to see what "Jakes" would do. Jakes did nothing but stare at him. John spoke, and called his name. Jakes stared harder; that was all.

Then John remembered that he had changed greatly, even changed intentionally. He had tried to lose himself to all the rest of the world. He was lost even here.

In the hotel barber shop he glanced in a glass, there

saw his face as the face of a stranger. At the corners of the firm lips and deep within the clear eyes was the old touch of bitterness, of weary disillusionment. Yet the eyes were not wholly without hope now. Late in the evening, he went strolling on Superior Street. And then—whom should he behold, almost the first of all the people that he laid eyes on, but Claud and Jean? She was not greatly like her former self. Her eyes indeed appeared more beautiful than ever. But her face was worn and thin, her temples grayed, and her figure like a veritable little shadow. A great hand of remorse clutched John by the throat. For him? He had written to her but the once. Were these drear changes, then, on his sole and unworthy account? Then his fears became allayed. Jean, not seeing him at all, turned face to Claud and laughed. It was a sweet, very loving laugh. Jean loved Claud dearly: he could see that. At least she could not be hating him very much, to be giving him looks like these.

John made his own explanation of Jean's sad appearance. She had loved Claud, had married him, had suffered greatly at his cruel hands, but—she loved him still. Women are women: there's no accounting for them at all. Anyway, the stars had broken forth for Jean as Claud had spoken to her: she seemed supremely happy. John got out of their way, unobserved.

In the morning he went to Mr. Proteus' office

again. Jean was standing in the waiting-room as John walked in. She had just arisen to take up a sheet of paper from the adjoining desk, and had not again sat down. As she looked up, she saw John. All at once, her face went white and rigid, and she put a little hand out suddenly, with its fingers spread upon the desk.

"A stranger," said John, advancing and holding out a hand.

"You have been long gone, sir, at least," Jean made shift to answer, after a little. "But we can hardly say that we have forgotten you. Did you know, John—do you know that Miss Banyard is very sick?"

"I know nothing," responded John stupidly, "about Duluth."

"She is sick, and is going to die. I go very often to see her and sit up with her of nights. That's one of the advantages [she blushed] of being an old maid. You have plenty of time to give to other people. Poor Miss Banyard, she keeps talking about things which she has upon her mind, but which, nevertheless, she cannot get herself rid of."

The buzzer sounded. "If you wish to see Mr. Proteus, you're next."

CHAPTER LIII

BY ALL THE WATER IN THE LAKE

CHAPTER LIII

By All the Water in the Lake!

IT WAS certainly a very delighted Mr. Proteus that received John Smith. After a brief account of the places in which he had been since last he had seen Mr. Proteus, John launched at once into a full proposal and description of his great idea, the plan that had come to him in the bench field, back in Montana—that moment while he had watched the great water-carriers bulge up above the trap-colored bluff.

Then Mr. Proteus, first of all, laid back his head and laughed. "By all the waters in the Lake!" he shouted. "I declare I never should have thought of *that*. How did you come to conceive of it? Never mind! Don't answer! Just be still and let me think."

He walked to the window, stood with his hands behind his back for a long time, looking out placidly across the busy water. Then he turned and said, "My soul, yes. It's a good plan, and it'll work. No, but there's a first class chance that it *may* work." He went ahead, planning out all the details with John.

CHAPTER LIV
WHILE THE MINUTES LAG

CHAPTER LIV

While the Minutes Lag

THERE were days of depression after that, for John; days of leaden sky and leaden Lake, days when the big ships he had once loved so well looked like weird and glutted monsters: staring stupidly, some in one direction and some in another; wandering more or less aimlessly about; yet all herded together by the unseen hand of insensate and insatiable commerce. Sometimes, to relieve the monotony and anxiety, John spent hours in some district-court room, listening to Mr. Proteus getting the better of other lawyers. Mr. Proteus had invited him to attend these trials, believing it would make John steadier and quieter on the day of his own. Mr. Proteus, however, even in the privacy of his own office, would never talk to John about Jean. Plainly enough, he did not believe John's plan infallible, else he would surely have been willing to talk about Jean.

So John wandered from court room to court room, from dock to dock, from elevator to elevator, waiting for the day of days. There would be no "continuance" this time. Mr. Proteus would not be sick himself. Neither would he be out of town on another case.

Neither would John be lying at death's door in a hospital somewhere—as Mr. Proteus used to have heard, and used (as he said) to have had good cause to believe.

CHAPTER LV

THE LAW ON ITS OWN TRIAL

CHAPTER LV

The Law on Its Own Trial

AT LENGTH the day came. Mr. Proteus went into the court room an hour or so before John, for Mr. Proteus had another case on hand—a brief and not overly important affair. When John went into the room, a good-sized crowd had already assembled, and the place was close and stuffy. John sat down modestly in a quiet spot. His mind seemed, from tense excitement, to be unnaturally alert. It was as if something in him that was not used to looking, looked; and as if something in him that was not used to seeing, saw. And yet there was really nothing for him to do in this matter, except wait. Mr. Proteus had told him that the law did not require an accused to testify—although, if he chose, he might testify, as a matter of course—also that he, Mr. Proteus, would not permit him to testify.

John looked all round the room, his eyes falling at length on the Judge—Judge Hektoen. He was a large, full-stomached man, with a keen, kindly face. Thank God for Judge Hektoen. John was not so sure about the court room crowd. It seemed, in his condition of mind, to be unfriendly.

The chamber soon became full, crowded, packed

to suffocation, so that there was no passing in the aisles or passageways. There was a soft whispering all about the room, persistent, continuous—a rippling susurration growing steadily. The Judge's gavel fell. An abrupt silence ensued, which was excruciating, as it dropped on his numbed ears, his dazed brain—resembling the after effect, he imagined, of a whole long hour of cannonading.

At length his case was called—his name. The room was still fuller now, and people were squeezed in the aisles. The papers had exploited his case, though not with any unfairness, and so the city had turned out. He could hear many people buzzing in the corridor outside, and even in the plaza round the court-house.

There was a great pounding at his heart.

Was it he that arose and went forward? Or was it but another self? He seemed almost to have remained seated exactly where he had been, then again to have arisen and taken the place which Mr. Proteus and the judge both pointed out to him.

"I am just a little surprised," said Judge Hektoen, looking at John's lawyer.

"Because I don't ask for another continuance?"

"I shouldn't be surprised if that's why I'm surprised."

Mr. Proteus was well acquainted with the judge, and he hazarded the jesting remark, although as if

in desperation: "You'll all be much more surprised than that before this case is over."

The indictment was read, a strange question asked, and the words, "Not guilty," answered.

Then began the selection of the jury. "Why," thought John, as the moments went by, "does Mr. Proteus take so much pains with that? Has he given up the plan, the plan I received from the water-carriers and which I have come a thousand miles to tell him about, and without which I should never have risked my person at the Head of the Lakes, even to the end of the ages? O God, if he has given up that plan, then—" In his soul he prayed.

He looked round the room. The spectators' benches seemed even more tightly packed, the aisles more full, than ever. Many persons were standing in the doorway, and, over their heads, he could view a great, tightly packed throng in the corridor.

Where was Jean? Would not Jean be here? Would she not care to come? He believed that he caught a glimpse of her in the second seat, over there to the right of him. No—yes—yes, it was Jean. Then his heart throbbed with bitterest disappointment, even as he thought he saw her. He felt, somehow, that her place was over there by Mr. Proteus, helping—no, exactly here by his own faltering side. Faltering? No, he would not falter. He would hold to the calm placidity that was his innocent right.

Mr. Proteus and the prosecuting attorney were still squabbling over the selection of jurors.

John was a bit of a lawyer, having read some law in a correspondence course (it had helped him in the laundry) and, of late, he had spent some time perusing the Criminal Statutes of Minnesota, so he understood a little of what was going on.

So many challenges were allowed "for cause" and so many could be "peremptory." Mr. Proteus, it appeared, was using all his privileges. Man after man was challenged, the matter argued (now and then not argued) and the man stepped down and slipped on out into the crowd of spectators. John noticed that Mr. Proteus did not reject a woman juror. He wondered why. Then he chanced to remember that Mr. Proteus had once said to him, talking over the case, that John was a mighty exceptionally good looking fellow, and that that was the kind to have a woman jury for. John doubted the looks, had always very much doubted them, and if this were Mr. Proteus' reason in this case— Pray God that the plan, the plan on which he depended, would be very much better founded than—

Mr. Proteus did indeed use all his challenges. Not a man to take chances on anything whatever was Mr. Proteus. Yet John could not altogether perceive the necessity for this meticulous care, if a verdict was not to be needed.

Then a pang of horror and fear smote his heart. Mr. Proteus had not indeed rejected his plan, but, in his soul, he had had very little faith in it. That was the true explanation of all this pow-wow.

Yet again he would tell himself, No, Mr. Proteus was only seeking to be reasonably careful, howsoever good the plan might be.

But what was *this* now? He was missing something. The prosecuting attorney was making his opening speech to the jury. John listened in surprise, astonishment, anger, chagrin, then deadly hate. Why, what— What accursed things this man was telling! *Any*body might know that a man like him, John Gridley Smith, the son of that other Smith, that no such man could be so base. He did not realize that the attorney was merely using the evidence which had accumulated, or seemed to accumulate, against him.

His head went round. He put his hands under him, and took tight hold on the sides of his bench. It seemed to him that he should die of shame, that he could not endure to be so maligned, here in the presence of everybody.

He looked at Mr. Proteus. That ordinarily strong-looking gentleman did not, for some strange reason, appear to John to be looking very strong now. He sat just like some flabby, spineless and dejected thing in his chair, unmoving, his mind apparently off, far

off, on some other case. Possibly the man was dreaming of his next hunting trip, his next fishing excursion. How much older he seemed today than usual. How much less efficient.

Ah! At last the prosecutor had finished. His talk had seemed interminable. John did not see how it could have failed to prejudice all the jury against him. O God! O God!

But Mr. Proteus would now arise in his wrath, and, with fiery eloquence born of long practice and righteous indignation, would everlastingly smash the horrible imputations of the prosecutor.

But Mr. Proteus did nothing of the sort. In fact he did not talk at all. He even—horror upon horrors—expressly waived his right to talk. Well, he *might* know what he was doing. Nothing for John to do, at all events, but sit and wait.

The examination of witnesses began.

First was established the *corpus delicti*—the fact that Mr. Andrew Polano was really dead, and that a murder had actually been committed. This was because of the law that no one could ever be convicted of murder till first the decedent was proved to have been murdered. These facts were established chiefly by the physician who had examined the body of Mr. Polano shortly after his decease, and who, later, had given expert testimony at the coroner's inquest. The records of the inquest were also shown.

Next was placed in evidence the Municipal Court's record, or was it the Police Court's record, of that quarrel (that "former" quarrel, as the prosecutor phrased it) which John had had with old Andy. This supplied, at least was made to appear to supply, one motive for the deed. "There had been bad blood between this young man and old Andy." So the prosecutor had declared in his opening speech. Now the allegation appeared to be clearly established. John, of course, had had no thought of holding a grudge against Andy, but the fact was, and was shown, that Andy had unlawfully gotten, or at least retained, possession of Mr. John Gridley Smith's watch. This watch, furthermore, had belonged to Mr. Smith's father, so that Mr. Smith had been terribly indignant and abusive toward Mr. Andrew Polano, even in the magistrate's court room. The officer who produced the record of the case even testified that Mr. Smith had threatened Mr. Polano with dire bodily injury, on that day, just as he had left the court room. This, of course, was untrue. But John, in his heart, knew that the man was sincere. The officer's imagination was simply running away with him—as indeed imagination does run away at times with each and every one of us.

When the officer had finished, Mr. Proteus asked, by way of cross-examination, only the following question: "You have spoken of Mr. John Gridley

Smith. Look at the accused, please, and say whether or not you can positively identify him."

The officer looked at the accused narrowly. "Yes, Mr. Proteus," he said, "that's him."

"Very well," responded Mr. Proteus. The cross-examination was at an end.

The next witness called was a middle-aged woman, rather good-looking, and certainly a quite self-possessed person—the type that cross-examination never disturbs, but only makes more positive. John had heard a little about legal tactics in one of his old-time talks with Jean. Among other matters he had learned that lawyers, as a rule, put on the stand their most positive witnesses first. Then, when these witnesses have given good, straight, clear-headed testimony—"spoken right out in meeting" with never a sign of hesitation or fear—then all the timid witnesses (being like sheep) would, on taking the stand themselves, speak out clearly and strongly too. "One of the worst things," Jean had told him, "that a lawyer can do is to place on the stand a timid witness at the beginning of his case. Such a witness is almost certain to hesitate, hedge, qualify, take back, and, in a word, set such a powerful example of weakness that all the following witnesses will be filled with fear and foolish vacillation. Then, naturally, comes disaster."

John saw plainly that the prosecuting officer had

not the slightest idea of allowing his present case to be ruined in any such way. First, of course, had come the medical expert and the records of the inquest—that was a matter of form, at least of necessity—to establish the *corpus delicti*. Then the clerk of the Municipal Court, an old timer before audiences and not to be disconcerted in any way. And now the present witness, who, plainly enough, had a ready tongue, plenty of brass, and a vivid imagination. Her name? Miss Margaret MacFarland.

Occupation? Dressmaker.

Had she ever seen the accused, Mr. John Gridley Smith, before? Yes, once.

No more than once? No.

When and where had she seen him? On the 9th day of September, such and such a year, at ten-five, A.M. He was coming out of the back door of Mr. Andy Polano's shop.

"Are you sure it wasn't the front door?"

"Perfectly certain. It was the back door."

"Had you seen him go into the front door?"

"No."

"How did you come to see him leave by the back door?"

"I was sitting at my window, sewing and looking out. I live there, in the building next to Mr. Polano's —I mean I room there. And the building I am in

runs back much farther than Mr. Polano's. The consequence is that when I look out of my window I look right down at Mr. Polano's back door—Mr. Polano that used to be. On the day you ask me about I was sitting there by my window, and I seen this Mr. Smith gentleman here come out. He's a pretty good-looking chap [a half titter ran round the court room, and the accused turned red] and so I says to Mabel (Mabel was settin' right next me) I says: 'Mabel,' I says, 'fasten eyes of admiration on the good-lookin' young gentleman just comin' out,' I says.

"Well, Mabel looks, an' she says, 'Well, he ain't so very hard to look at,' she says, 'that's a fact,' says Mabel. 'But,' she says, 'ain't he awful excited, and don't he keep stoppin' an' lookin' back? An' his face is all bruised, too.'

"Just then the young man stops, and turns round for a minute. Then he goes in at Andy's door again, and, after a little, comes a-runnin' like the hounds was after him. He gets to the alley, and runs away.

"I says, 'Mabel' I says, an' shakes my head. Says I, 'Mabel, something wrong there.' 'No,' says Mabel. 'Yes,' says I. I looks up at the clock, an' I says, 'Ten-five,' I says. Says I, 'I'm going to remember the time, for it'll like as not be something important,' I says, 'to know jest exactly when the murder took place.'

"Mabel she laughs, and what do you think? Why, in less than two hours, there was a extry on the street, and it was all about the murder of Andy Polano."

The prosecutor turned the witness over to Mr. Proteus. Mr. Proteus looked weak. John had never seen him look so weak before, especially in a court room. As if the case were lost, and he knew it, he asked the woman: "Miss MacFarland, will you please look at the accused and tell us whether or not you identify him?"

Witness looked, sniffed the air. "Certainly I identify him."

"You are perfectly sure that he is the man whom you saw passing out of Mr. Polano's back door at ten-five A.M., on the day you have just been talking about?"

"Perfectly sure." She put up both her hands to her back hair, and gave it sundry reassuring pats.

"And you cannot be mistaken?"

"Well, I should say not."

"That will be sufficient."

Next to take the stand was a timid woman, of neurasthenic type—the Mabel of Miss MacFarland's testimony. She was plainly ill at ease, kept shifting her position, laying her hands now in her lap now on the arm of her chair, and again twisting and untwisting with them a little lace handkerchief.

She tried, however, to ape the self-assurance of her predecessor in the chair.

Her name was Mabel Frinsy. A sewing girl, like Miss MacFarland—*just* like Miss MacFarland. Yes, she had seen Mr. Smith before—once. And so she went on, substantiating Miss MacFarland's testimony in every particular. Not once did she differ from it, or add to or subtract therefrom. She also tried to give it in exactly Miss MacFarland's manner, but, in the attempt, was not supremely successful.

Mr. Proteus cross-examining: "Miss Frinsy, will you please look at the accused and tell us whether or not you identify him?"

Witness looked—hurt, almost weeping.

"Do not be alarmed in the slightest, Miss Frinsy," Mr. Proteus reassured her. "But, when you have once again secured control of yourself, please to look at the defendant and tell the jury whether or not you identify him."

After a long minute she turned and glanced at the prisoner, turned again toward Mr. Proteus, nodding her head.

"You are perfectly sure that this is the man you saw passing out of Mr. Polano's back door at ten-five A.M., of the month and day you have just mentioned?"

She nodded.

"Perfectly sure?"

She nodded again.

"And you cannot be mistaken?"

She shook her head.

"That will be sufficient."

Next came Mr. Walker-Wales. Mr. Walker-Wales was a little old dried up negro, who acted part of the year as janitor in the building wherein Margaret MacFarland and Mabel Frinsy had their sewing-rooms. The rest of the year—he did not like to say what he did the rest of the year—read good books mostly.

He was strangely under the influence of both the preceding witnesses, hence not only his manner but also the substance of his testimony was a strange hodge-podge of ill-assorted items—most curious contrasts and wholly irreconcilable contradictions.

"Mr. Walker-Wales, have you ever seen the accused before?"

"Yassuh, yassuh," he cried in a loud, brave voice. "Yassuh, I done seen him when he went in at de front do', and I done seen him, jus' a minute later, when he come out de back door, an' in betwixt dem two times he done de mudduh."

Everybody smiled, and Mr. Walker-Wales turned suddenly timid. He did not fully realize that he had just attempted to usurp the function of the jury, but he did mistily perceive that he had somehow made a black fool of himself. Therefore turned he timid.

"Will you please state to the jury on what day of the year and at what time of the day you saw the accused, Mr. John Gridley Smith, enter the second-hand store of Mr. Andrew Polano?"

"O say now, jury," he cried, in a shrill, trembling voice, "I ain't got no watch."

Everybody laughed at the comical old negro.

But the County Attorney said, adopting his kindliest tone for the purpose of rehabilitating his witness: "Now, Mr. Walker-Wales, you can tell time by a clock, can't you?"

The old man hesitated a moment. No doubt he saw before him the penitentiary and torture-machines of every conceivable size and shape, the sole end and object of whose construction had been the punishment of elderly colored gentlemen convicted of perjury. Evidently the safest way out was to know nothing, to have seen nothing, to have heard nothing, and, in a word, to be a perfect human blank.

"No sah, I cain't tell no time. Don't know nuthin' 'bout clocks."

"But you can read, can't you?'

"No, sah; cain't read."

"Did you not say, just a moment ago, that you spent the most of your time each summer reading good books?"

Mr. Proteus cried out: "Gentleman must not cross-examine his own witness."

"Objection sustained," ruled his Honor.

"But *I* ain't got no objection," overruled the witness. "Good books ain't nevuh done *me* no hahm."

The whole room, jury included, broke into unrestrainable laughter, the severe strain of a murder trial was lifted for a moment, and everybody seemed to feel a little better.

Everybody, that is, but the County Attorney. He had plainly been upset by the witness's nonsense and its unexpected effect on the crowd. He blew his nose, snorted a little, and, when he could go on again, began once more to attempt his witness's rehabilitation. But this witness simply would not rehabilitate.

Then the cross-examination. The beginning of this made the whole room howl, his absolutely helpless Honor included among the howlers.

"Will you please look at the accused?" asked Mr. Proteus.

"No, sah. Ain't gwine to look at him."

"Why, he isn't hard to look at, is he?" (Laughter.)

"Don't know nuthin' 'tall 'bout him."

"But you've testified that you *have* looked at him, haven't you?"

"I ain't sayin' I is, an' I ain't sayin' I ain't." At this further evidence of the old man's complete demoralization, Mr. Prosecutor jumped up and began walking the floor.

His Honor rapped for order, and when at length he had got it, he said to Mr. Walker-Wales, "Now, look here, Witness, if you don't want to get into trouble with this court, you turn right straight round in the opposite direction from that in which you're now looking, and tell the jury whether you have ever seen the prisoner in this case before."

Like a flash the old negro jumped up, and staring at the accused as if he had been a veritable ghost, cried out: "Why, Jedge, I been a-lookin' at him all the time, an' he's the man that done the murder."

With this he suddenly shot for the out-of-doors, the packed people in the aisle making ready way for him, in spite of all the crowding.

"That will be sufficient," laughed Mr. Proteus. "The sheriff needn't bring your witness back, unless *you* want him. Is that all your evidence, Mr. Prosecutor?"

"Not by any means," responded the attorney in a firm, level tone. There is much more coming, as you will plainly perceive." He then called Mr. Pressior, realtor of Superior, and, after him, Mr. Skooth, of Duluth. Then the plain-clothes man who had, so long ago, arrested John for murder. And all of these, to John's immense surprise and relief, gave less positive testimony than he had felt sure that they would do. They were, however, all quite certain, on the cross-examination, as to the accused's identity.

Finally, said the prosecutor: "Call Mr. Fairfield Benjamin."

At the name of Benjamin, John's poor heart flew up in his mouth. He had not known that Mr. Benjamin was to appear at all. He did not believe that even Mr. Proteus had known that fact. Mr. Benjamin was one of Duluth's most prosperous citizens, a pioneer, a man of undoubted probity and social standing. Whatever he said would have great weight, every single syllable of it. God grant that nothing he might testify to could in any way, shape, manner or form, interfere with the success of the great plan.

While the preliminary questions were being asked of Mr. Benjamin—his age, his period of residence in Duluth, whether he was the same Mr. Fairfield Benjamin who, for a time, had been the president of the Lake Superior Trust Co., and so on: during all this time John forced himself violently to think of other matters.

He began to remember again Jean. Why, he once more asked himself, was Jean not beside him? As his mother was dead, he greatly needed Jean—Jean, his wife. Then he recalled with astonishment the patent fact that Jean was not his wife, not so much as his betrothed. To the contrary, she might possibly later become— No, he would not think of that. Now, again, what was the great Mr. Benjamin saying?

Mr. Benjamin was saying that, at a little after ten o'clock A.M., of September nine, in such and such a year, he had been collecting his rents in the Paupukkeewis building. Yes, that was a building next to Mr. Andrew Polano's. No, it was not the building that Miss MacFarland and Miss Frinsy had been sewing in. *That* was on the north side of Mr. Polano's. His, Mr. Benjamin's building, the Paupukkeewis, was on the south.

Mr. Benjamin was plainly not only a gentleman of the old school, but he was also a man of considerable culture. He spoke with a fine, distinguished enunciation, his grammar was absolutely perfect, he answered each time just the question that was asked, proffered nothing at all of his own, and yet dodged nothing. All was going smoothly for the prosecution in the case of State *versus* Smith. Mr. Benjamin, the State's star witness, had, doubtless, been reserved by intent till the close of the State's testimony for the sake of artistic climax.

Between each answer and the next question, the County Attorney allowed a considerable pause to elapse. That was still more theatrical skill. In each and every pause the room was filled with complete silence. Now, for the first time, John began to be aware that there was a large clock on the wall, exactly opposite to the jury, and that this clock was ticking with extreme loudness. Even louder than

the crack of doom itself, ticked on and on the great court room clock—yet not more loudly, after all, than John's own perturbed heart appeared to be striking in his bosom.

In one of the pauses John turned his head and saw Jean—weeping. No, it was some one else. He had been mistaken about this same person before too. Jean had not even been in the room at any time. So he then firmly believed. Slowly he turned round again. The clock still ticked on. And the grinding, crushing, everlastingly ruinous testimony went on too.

John did not try to listen to all of it, could not have understood half of it had he attempted to do so.

He began to think, somehow, that the world was very sweet and good outside. How very pleasant, in his childhood, to go a-fishing! He wondered if boys went fishing any more. He had not noticed boys lately—that is, fishing. He said to himself that, if all went well this day— What! Mr. Benjamin had finished. At long last the direct testimony of this very much mistaken, but undoubtedly sincere, man had all been given in.

Mr. Proteus took charge of the witness.

"Mr. Benjamin, look at the accused. Take one good long look."

"Yes, sir." Mr. Benjamin looked steadily.

"Is that the man whom you saw with his hands

all red, the man with the two-edged dagger, the man who cried: 'Yes, I've killed you, just as I always said that I would do'?"

Mr. Benjamin looked the accused all over again, even arose and went close up to him. John's poor heart was playing the mischief against his straining ribs. At last Mr. Benjamin decided, "Yes, Mr. Proteus, that's the man."

"You are quite certain?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you could not possibly be mistaken?"

"No."

"Are you aware, Mr. Benjamin, that liberty and reputation, and all that a man holds dearest are depending largely on your word?"

"I did not know that my word was so important as that," responded Mr. Benjamin, modestly. "But this, I am sure, is the man I saw with the dagger. Yes, sir, I am perfectly sure about all that."

John looked over at the jury. In each of its twelve set faces he read that the verdict had fully been reached even now. What could save him from the vengeance of these? Only "the plan"—if that. He felt as if the world were slipping away. Then, as he heard Mr. Proteus once more, a little wave of hope uprose in him. Again it subsided.

"That will be sufficient," Mr. Proteus was saying. "Is your testimony all in, Mr. Whanning?"

"All in," responded the prosecutor, grinning with glee. "And yours?"

Mr. Proteus was on his feet. He was almost shouting in his eagerness to make his Honor hear. "I demand," he was crying. "Your Honor, I demand that the case be dismissed."

Good old Mr. Proteus! But listen to his Honor.

"Dismissed!" His Honor jumped suddenly up. His fountain pen rolled from the desk and smashed into pieces on the floor. Then his eyeglasses fell from his nose. "Dismissed, you say? Dismissed?"

"Dismissed. Yes, dismissed."

"Why? On what grounds? I cannot see—"

"Lack of evidence. That's all. Lack of evidence."

"Lack of evidence!" His Honor seemed perfectly dumbfounded. "Why, Mr. Proteus, you've often practiced in this court; I— There isn't any lack of evidence for the prosecution at all. There seems, however, to be a total lack on the part of the defense —a *total* lack, Mr. Proteus."

Mr. Proteus continued speaking—now very, very slowly and with preternatural distinctness. All the room was like a tomb for its deep silence, except as Mr. Proteus' slowly enunciated syllables from time to time shattered it. No one missed a sound of the lips. No one could have missed a sound.

The lawyer stopped speaking altogether, moved up slowly until he had reached the supposed culprit.

Then he took him suddenly by the shoulder. "This, your Honor, is not even the accused in the case."

"Not the—" His Honor fairly shouted. Then he cried again, "Not the accused? Not the—"

"*He* is not the accused," continued Mr. Proteus, "not Mr. John Gridley Smith. He is Mr. James Hanford Smith, of Superior, Wisconsin, Mr. John Gridley Smith's brother. We have chosen to test the observational powers of the witnesses in this case." He turned to where John sat with his head down and his hair in his eyes. "Mr. John Gridley Smith, the accused in this case, will you please to come forward?"

John arose in the dark shadow beneath his far window, slowly made his way to the front.

There he turned, and as he stood by the side of his brother, the fact was revealed that the two men were indeed "as like as two peas."

For a moment no one uttered a syllable. Then, as the meaning of Mr. Proteus' subtle strategy worked its way through even the thickest of the jurymen's and spectators' skulls, a shout arose that might have done honor to a football team just after the good old home eleven has won a victory.

The crowd, including the jury, rushed for John and Jim with outstretched hands. What a scene of handshaking and back-thumping ensued! All present were slightly hysterical.

His Honor beat his desk and beat it again, crying: "Sheriff! Order! Order!" All to no avail. Then he laid his mallet down, and, like the good sport he was, clapped hands and joined in the uproar.

When, at length, the turmoil and vociferation had subsided, Mr. Proteus attempted to speak. But, each time, the crowd broke out, worse even than before. Mr. Benjamin stood, staring and scratching his cultured head. The old maid witnesses had gone. The old colored man had gone long ago, of course. The fact that human beings are better imaginers than observers had once more been established—to be, of course, once again forgotten. The joke was on the whole human family, and, by its representatives in that court room, the family made due acknowledgment of the fact.

"If your Honor insists and the County Attorney wishes," Mr. Proteus was able to continue, after a long time, "I will proceed to establish the identity of each of these two young men. I will first go on the stand myself."

"It isn't necessary," shouted the prosecutor above the clamor and din. "I remember, now, seeing Jim Smith, of Superior, years and years ago. That is he. He has a large scar behind his left ear, but I'd forgotten the fact."

"And, if you wish," continued Mr. Proteus, "I will prove by a number of witnesses that Mr. James

Smith, when the murder was committed, was in Europe."

Mr. Whanning shook his head and laughed. "Mr. James Smith is not on trial."

"I just wanted you to know the full strength of our position," purred Mr. Proteus.

"Case dismissed!" yelled his Honor, "and that's all for the day." More yells followed, and the spectators filed out, then the jury. At length the lawyers, together with his Honor and the sheriff.

John looked for his attorney. Ah! there he was, approaching. "Good plan, my boy," said Mr. Proteus, shaking hands. "Good plan! You remember I always declared that you ought to have been a lawyer. It's not too late to begin studying in my office, even yet. There's a great deal more that I want to say to you, but I'll let you learn it all from Jean. You'd rather. Go up on the bluff immediately." He rushed away.

CHAPTER LVI

THAT WHICH HAS BEEN TOUCHED BY LOVE AND TURNED INTO SERVICE

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That Which Has Been Touched by Love and Turned into Service

JOHN looked for Jean, but could not find her anywhere. His heart then fell a thousand miles. Had she missed that scene, the scene wherein the plan—HIS plan—the plan he had come a thousand miles and more, and after years of wandering, to lay before Mr. Proteus—*that* scene, had she missed it? *Had* she?

Brother Jim was walking side by side with him now, as he moved toward the elevator. On the other side of Jim walked a bright and beautiful young lady—Jim's betrothed, Miss Claudia Allouez. She looked at Jim continually as if to say to him, "*You*'re the hero of all this hubbub. They couldn't have done a thing without *you*."

Clarified she to John, "This kind of justice must be what is called 'poetic justice.' Into trouble because of people's failure to observe closely; out again for the same reason. But you couldn't have done a thing without *Jim*."

Then, somehow, as John got into the elevator, he lost Claudia and Jim. Strange, too! He had not tried to do that. He had, in fact, tried not to do that.

As he passed out through the southern exit of the court-house, he stopped for a moment to let Jim and his sweetheart have a chance to find him. Some dull fellow, standing there, was explaining the joke of the day to some one else still duller. "Why, you see," said the less dull, "they *couldn't* try him no more. All the witnesses the State had had, had already sworn everything they knew onto *Jim* Smith, and he wasn't even the accused. Well, then, those same people couldn't turn round an' swear it all over again on somebody else."

"Then," queried the duller chap, "why don't they re-arrest John Smith, an' have a new trial?"

Number two was non-plussed. "I guess they'd have to get new witnesses," he hazarded. "And, besides—" But yet another bystander, putting in, explained: "O, don't you know? The Constitution of the United States declares distinctly that no man shall ever be put in jeopardy twice for the same offense. And the courts *all* hold," he continued, with plainly marked enthusiasm for the result of the trial just completed, "that 'jeopardy' takes place when a man's jury is sworn. After that, you got to convict him then an' there on that very same trial or you don't never get no more chancet again." This, as John reflected, was quite in accordance with what he had heard from Mr. Proteus. The two dull men went off together, one humming the old lakeshore

ballad: "Said Jim to Jack, 'Now what'll you take?'"

Ah! there were Claudia and Jim again. He called to them, and they came slowly up. "They couldn't have done it at all without *you*," Claudia was still murmuring. Then, to John: "Jim and I are going to the beach for a long swim. You, no doubt, will be wanting to mount the bluff for a bath in the higher atmosphere." And before John could say a word, the two had hurried away—bluff and beach alike forgotten, most assuredly, for each was looking straight at the other's countenance. As John believed, Claudia was still murmuring: "They couldn't have done a thing without you."

Drawing a long sigh, he also murmured: "Be happy, fools, while you may. Love's little hour will not last forever." He stopped several times, looking about. "Where, still, was Jean? Where, furthermore, was Claud? He had a notion, for just one single moment, to get his baggage together, rush incontinently down to the Omaha depot, and so off to Granville, there to enter into business again and never to return to Duluth. He could easily write to Mr. Proteus, and find out what the fee for defending was. But then he reflected that Mr. Proteus had said that Jean would be wanting to speak with him. O very well, he would walk up to Morning Glory Cottage. No doubt she was already there, and he would see just what this fine young lady wanted of him.

He had reached, going south, the corner of Fifth Avenue West and First Street. Now he turned, intending to retrace his steps, pass half round the court-house, and so walk up to the brow of the bluff.

Meantime, the apparently indifferent Jean had really attended the trial. She had gone early, and had taken a seat at one side of the room, where, in deep shadow, she could clearly observe the accused without herself being seen. All this was in accordance with the wish of Mr. Proteus. Mr. Proteus, however, had not at any time intimated to his confidential secretary just what the plan of John's defense was going to be. This reserve was indulged in not because Mr. Proteus did not trust Jean. It was simply because he wanted to "spring" a magnificent surprise for her, as well as for the rest of his audience. It was also because he feared, and feared greatly, that the plan of the defense might fail. There's many a slip betwixt an arraignment and a successful motion to dismiss—even with a first-class and wholly unsuspected identity test up the sleeve of the attorney for the defense.

After a time, as Jean sat in her dark seat, scarcely able to repress her tears of anxiety for John, she watched each and every person that entered the room with a keen, piercing scrutiny. This was not in the least because she suspected that any personal identity test had been held in reserve for the day's

program. It was only because, having slept but little for the last three nights, her brain had all at once become abnormally active, all her senses exceedingly alert.

The room filled fast. After a time she saw Claud enter, and take a place on one of the rear benches of the room. Mr. Proteus had already been present when she herself had come in. There he plainly was, moving about in the space reserved for attorneys and all the various other parties at interest in the case.

When the case was called and the supposedly accused went forward, her eyes so filled with tears that she could not even see him.

As the interrogation of witnesses began, her eyes cleared, the pulsing of her heart grew steadier, and all her being appeared to concentrate in just her two sharp ears and her two sharp eyes. Each sentence, word, and syllable she hung upon, as if it were the utterance of fate itself. In fact it was the utterance of fate for her.

Then, all at once, in an interval between witnesses, some official of the court stepped over to one of the windows to let the curtain up.

Then, of a sudden, she half rose. Sat as suddenly down again—not wholly able to stifle a little "O!"

John! She had seen him! They could not fool *her*. Sitting over there, beneath the window, with his

head down and the hair pulled into his eyes, was John, *her* John. Head down or head up, hair straight or hair hanging, she would have known John in the Desert of Gobi.

Then the great scheme of the defense began to dawn on her. And Mr. Proteus had meant it all as a surprise—if it won. If it didn't win, then— She was not to suffer the awful shock and feeling of absolute ruin and despair which would surely have been her portion had she known the plan of defense in advance and been unduly uplifted by it. The man in the dock there—that must be John's brother, Jim Smith, from Superior. Of him she had often heard, but him she had never seen before.

And of all the eyes in that court room, she reflected, hers and Jim's and Mr. Proteus' alone had known the true John. She was glad at least for that one thing, whether or not the plan should lose or win. But it would win. None of the witnesses could know Jim from John.

Just at this moment she beheld Claud Tyrone, in his back seat, half rise, just as she herself had done but a few seconds earlier, then sink back into his seat. Not alone her eyes and Jim's and Mr. Proteus' had understood the situation.

Then she saw Claud get up and start for the place where John sat. It was just as Mr. Benjamin had taken the chair and begun to give his direct testi-

mony. In Claud's eyes she saw the awful thing which the fellow intended to do—create a scene there in the court room, disclose to judge and jury the fact that the prisoner at the bar was not really the accused, but that the accused himself was sitting over yonder beneath that window. Ruin for John! How could she prevent it?

She rose and began pushing after Claud.

Because of the gallantry of the crowd in making ready way for her, a woman, she managed to reach Claud's side before he could get to John. Plucking him by the sleeve, she insisted she had something very important to say to him. Claud, in fact, had not, as yet, completely satisfied himself that the man beneath the window was John. He had simply been determined to learn the truth. And when he discovered Jean at his side, Jean with her wonderful and exalting smile, he turned and went back with her—no doubt reflecting that the trial would probably continue for days, so that, if the real John Smith was the man who was sitting beneath the window, he should have, hereafter, an abundance of time in which to demonstrate that fact to the court.

Luring Claud out into the corridor, she then took him into the elevator, then wholly outside the building. There she began a great mumble-jumble story about how John could easily be saved. She of course assumed that Claud—good, kind-hearted

and always helpful Claud—would be most eager to assist in that consummation.

Claud expressed his entire willingness to do anything on earth to help John—if it would only please Jean. But she made him promise, promise three separate and very greatly deliberate times. She wasted a quarter of an hour, almost, in extracting those three repetitive promises—which promises Claud, in fact, was quite too ready to give in the first place without the slightest insistence.

Then Jean began to lay out her plan before him. It was the most wonderful, wonderful of plans! She expatiated, dilated, harped, descanted, and again expatiated on the marvelousness, absolute reasonableness and full practicability of that plan. Why did trials take so long? she mentally asked. She did certainly wish and hope and pray that John's would come to an end immediately. What should she say to Claud next? O what? How should she keep him waiting further, when, at length, her pretended plan for John's salvation, in all its extreme detail, periphrasis, and circumlocution, should have been laid before him—as, sooner or later, it surely must be?

However, she did manage, after a fashion, to keep talking on and on—glancing, from time to time, at the court-house door to see if, perchance, a crowd were coming forth—a crowd with shouts of sudden victory on its ecstatic lips.

All at once the crowd came—shouting, gesticulating, insisting that that was the slickest trick, that of Mr. Proteus, in the history of St. Louis County.

"What's that you say?" demanded Claud, rushing up to one of the men who had just come down from the court room.

The man told him all.

Then Claud cursed aloud and vehemently, not even attempting to pretend, any more, that he had wished for his cousin's acquittal.

Jean suddenly remembered that Mr. Proteus had told her that, as soon as the trial was at an end, she should proceed to Morning Glory Cottage, inasmuch as she would have had sufficient excitement for one day—win or lose. She also believed he had said that, if John should win, he would send him up to Morning Glory Cottage after her. Good old Mr. Proteus! He had clearly foreseen that it would not do for John to receive her congratulations in the presence of a multitude.

So she went on up to Morning Glory Cottage, stopping for a moment on the way to see Miss Banyard.

John, meantime, was proceeding slowly up the Golden, rather the leaden, Stair. For his heart, at least, was like lead. After all, how little had been accomplished by this trial! His innocence had not been established. He had merely escaped the clutches

of the law, shown that all the prosecution's witnesses were poor observers. But the public—and that was the real jury, after all—would continue to think him guilty. They would loudly applaud the cunning of Mr. Proteus—after the fashion of publics everywhere, who, without exception, are lovers of cunning—but they would still believe John guilty of a foul, a most cold-blooded murder. He believed that Jean still loved him, and he knew that Mr. Proteus wished him to marry her. But how could he marry with such a blot, such an ineffaceable stain, on his reputation? He could not do it, he would not.

So his heart was like lead. Victory and freedom—but freedom that was merely a prison without walls, and a victory won by a stratagem, not by a clean, straight meeting of the issue.

All at once, hearing a joyful outcry, he looked up. A little, dark-faced, dapper man was running to meet him. The Mr. Ferret of his days of wandering! Like a sudden page it was, out of his life with old Bo. Well, there was certainly a very great pleasure in meeting Mr. Ferret now—now when he did not have to run from him. "Too late," he almost shouted, "for anything but congratulations."

Mr. Ferret looked at him in tremendous and unassumed surprise.

"I do indeed congratulate you, Mr. Gridley—I mean Mr Smith—I mean Your Grace. But why

have you tried to elude me all these many months, many years?"

"As if you didn't know."

"I certainly do not know."

"Acquitted," said John, triumphantly. "Just now. Yonder."

"Acquitted?" Mr. Ferret stood with his little round mouth wide open. "Acquitted?"

"Certainly. Acquitted. Accused of murder. Just tried yonder in that court-house. All the witnesses swore it was my brother that had done the deed—my brother having impersonated me on the trial. And then they couldn't try me for it. In fact, it was neither of us."

"Well, by heaven!" said the ferret-eyed man. "So *that* was why you kept running away! And that was why the big, square-built chump— Why, I thought he too was after the English reward. He never told me differently, and I never, of course, informed him of *my* purpose. Why, Your Grace, you're a duke. And I've been trailing you all about the United States for years, trying to inform you of that fact."

"Was *that* all? Don't you suppose I've known these many years on end that I was a duke—the Duke of Duluth?"

Ferret looked puzzled. "I was told you didn't know," he said. "I was told that your parents knew,

but that they never would tell you, never wishing you to get any highfalutin' notions about yourself."

"Highfalutin'? My father died before I had ever become the Duke of Duluth, my mother soon after."

"I think," said the ferret, somewhat deliberately, "that this is a comedy of errors. At all events, I begin to see light. This Duke of Duluth, I apprehend—"

"Is merely a nickname, an epithet, a *nom de guerre*, a jocular appellation applied to me in college, where—Well, you see, it is a custom in Minneapolis and St. Paul (the old-time rivals of this extremely ambitious and rapidly growing city) to re-christen a man who—well—er—who—you see, who esteems his own abilities and situation in life pretty highly, 'The Duke of Duluth.'"

"My dear fellow," said the ferret, and there was much awe and grandeur in his tones, in spite of the seeming familiarity in the words themselves, "my dear fellow, *you are really a duke*. A *duke*, my dear fellow, a DUKE, an actual duke."

"A—a—what?"

"A duke. The Duke of Durmline. Your Grace, may I be the first to congratulate you on your accession to the title?"

"Er—how much does it cost?"

"How much does *what* cost?" asked the puzzled ferret.

"To be congratulated? Everything has its price, you know."

"Nothing whatever. Neither will it cost you anything to assume all the rights, rank and title of the Duke of Durmline. You have merely to establish your identity as John Gridley Smith, of Safe Center, Iowa, the heir to all these things. Your great uncle, the former duke of your house, died at an extreme old age, some years ago, and, since then, we've been trying to locate the heir to the title. I, a Pinkerton man, was employed to look you up."

"And I, a fugitive from injustice, supposed you were trying to arrest me for murder and put me in jail."

"Exactly so. The dukedom is slightly in debt. I may say—about twelve hundred thousand dollars —and there are no assets. About all there used to be have been consumed in searching for you. Your great uncle was childish for a number of years before he died, and so lost heavily. But the debts may easily be beaten down, and many of them even got rid of without the slightest payment."

"And what's the opportunity for service?"

"Opportunity for what?"

"For service, for helping the world? Superservice, you know, and all that kind of thing. Look out over the Lake there, that symbol of mighty service to all the earth."

"There'll not be any special chance, I fear, for that kind of thing in your new life as the Duke of Durmline. You'll be kept quite busy for a considerable number of years, paying, or else beating, debts. But you can make an almighty big show. You'll have one of the proudest titles of nobility in the universe, and all you'll have to do will be to look big, and let folks say to you, 'Your Grace, this' and 'Your Grace, that.' Take the title and beat the debts. There's a younger branch of the family in Australia that will do it, if yours don't."

"'Your Grace' be hanged!" cried John in anger. "I have no fight with the English nobility. My own dear mother's character is sufficient guarantee for that. But, if I can only get a dukedom by assuming more debts than I can ever pay, and by beating honest people out of their money, then we'll let that dukedom go. I prefer the nickname article, with all the good humor that attaches to it and with all its honest service to the world. My brother, Jim, I'm sure would decide the same way. You really needn't bother him."

"Your Grace!" He held a paper out appealingly. "Think what it really means to you—the opportunity to be aristocratic and to get service out of others for nothing. Here is a full and unquestioned statement of your pedigree; the date when your mother ran away from her ancestral home to marry the man

of her choice—a man whom she had previously met when traveling in America. He was a born American, and she came back all the way from England to meet him and to marry him. The reasons—" He kept running on. And John remembered now that, in his boyhood, his mother had from time to time received letters from a kinsman back in England, letters she would never let him see. But John shook his head. "I have other plans," he decided definitely. But, at last, on Mr. Ferret's most earnest solicitation, he took the big stiff piece of paper, folded it up and put it in his pocket.

"My name's on that paper," was Mr. Ferret's parting information. "My name and address. Should you ever change your mind, write to me. Meantime, I'll see your brother, and then cable Australia."

John was out of hearing: he knew Jim too well even to talk about him any more in connection with the dukedom. He went on up the bluff, wondering why Jean had not attended the trial. Ah, there was Jean, just coming out of Morning Glory Cottage! She advanced to meet him—very sweet and self-contained. She spoke. "Look who's coming, John."

John turned. It was Claud. John called cheerily to his cousin, and held out both hands for congratulations. Surely if he, John, the aggrieved one, were willing to forget and forgive, then truly he, the aggressor—

But Claud pretended not to see him. The cold-blooded murderer of Andy Polano went straight up to Jean, dear little Jean La Croix, holding out both his criminal hands to her. And Jean took the hands, actually took them in both of hers, seemed even to cling to them, while she looked Claud in his bold and brassy eyes. Her own eyes seemed to overflow with happiness and joyous welcome to this unspeakable hound.

There arose in John's heart a tumultuous wave of hatred, an overwhelming desire for immediate, far too long deferred, revenge. All these years, this murderer—this contaminating and contemptible cousin of his by affinity—this— He decided to take now, at the close of things, his just and due revenge. In the very sight of Jean? Certainly, here in her sight. After all, why not? Jean did not love him, John. She loved instead (as any other woman would have done, he thought) this good-looking cur, this monstrous reprobate, this infernally— And that was all the justice there was in this world! Why care for the good opinions of a world like this? A strange humming in his ears, a dancing of all the objects round about him! Only to punish! Only this once in his life to see an absolute, thorough-going scoundrel— But what was this that Claud was running on about to Jean? No need for John to hurry, was there? Owing to his life of hard outdoor exercise on the

Bilbo farm, he was stronger and more active than ever. Claud, on the contrary, as anyone could plainly see, had been made flabby and weak by his life of dissipation. He, therefore, could not get away. And John intended to thresh him this time within an inch of his life. It would be an easy matter. And no foolishly fancied resemblance between his cousin and himself should intervene, on this occasion, to save the scoundrel from his just deserts. But what was this that Claud was saying? John would just hear him out.

And this was what John heard Claud say. "I love you very much, dear Jean, and I want you to be my wife. I thought, once, that you were beneath me. I know much better now. You are truly the equal of any man upon this earth. I know you love me too, for, here of late, you have been very kind to me, even much more than kind."

Then Jean spoke. And John knew in advance that her words would be most tender. "Dear Claud," she responded, "dear, dear Claud—I do like you very much indeed."

John held his revengeful breath to catch the last, bitterest syllable.

"Yes," she went on. "I like you better, probably, than you can ever guess. Better, no doubt, than even Violet Skinner of Granville—"

John held his breath once again. What about that

contemptible Violet Skinner? What could *her* destiny have to do with the fortunes of these three?

"Much better," Jean continued, "than does even Violet Skinner—or, rather, Violet Tyrone—for she is your wife."

Claud, staggering back, released her hands. All at once he seemed to be growing aged, his skin to turn into parchment, his eyes to cloud up with the mists of very many years. Claud put a hand to his wrinkled forehead. Then, like a man in a dream, he murmured: "Yes, I am married. It is true. To Violet Skinner."

He fell back yet a pace or two more.

Then Jean spoke to him again. "Go into the city, Claud. Then see Mr. Proteus—at once. He has many, many things to say to you which will interest you. That's a dear, good boy. Go."

Claud, still like a man in a vision: "Yes, Jean, I will go."

He turned and went.

John reflected that, after all, he had very little more right to propose to Jean than Claud himself had had. Unmarried though he was and free from the guilt of crime (or, really, after the assault and battery intentions of just now?) he was still supposed by the public to be a murderer. No, he could not offer Jean a stainless name. He, therefore, would never speak to her about his love.

But Jean was talking to him eagerly, offering heartiest congratulations on the result of his trial. "And that was *your* idea, I know, John, the identity test," she deduced cleverly. "For not until after you returned to Duluth this last time, did Mr. Proteus even know that you had a relative in Superior."

John waved the credit aside magnanimously. "My idea," he said, "but, without the skillful collaboration of Mr. Proteus—nothing." He looked a little fiercely at her. "Why were you not at the trial?"

"I *was* at the trial." She went on to tell why she had left the court room—taking with her the dangerous Claud. John's heart began singing as never it had sung before. Still—he *could* not, *would* not, speak of the matter which most concerned him.

He lifted his hat and extended a hand. "I must tell you good-bye."

"You won't tell me good-bye, Sir Rapid, until I have spoken of other matters."

"As for example?"

"As for example this letter from Miss Van Dusen, also this one from Mr. Red George."

John gave a start. "Letter! A letter from the dead?"

"Read," suggested Jean, "first of all *this*."

John took in his hands the letter she held out to him, and began to read. It was in the writing of

Miss Scaligera Van Dusen, and had been addressed to Mr. Proteus. It ran:

Dear Sir:

I am writing to you, although my words are really meant for one of your clients, Mr. John Smith. With Mr. Smith I became acquainted when he was a student here at the University, I at the time being engaged in the study, at least for the more part, of the Latin dative case, as this appeared in the writings for hundreds of years—But I wander.

To return to Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith and I were very good friends—not anything more than that, I do assure you. But very good friends. He, for one thing, was engaged on a wide variety of studies, while I, on my part, almost restricted the entire field of my attention to the one and single subject, the Latin dative—a subject which Mr. Smith did not at all understand and which he always listened with deference about. This remarkable case—But again I wander. Too much I have always wandered from the point, when, in years gone by, I attempted to instruct your good client and my good friend, Mr. John Smith, in certain important matters concerning the welfare of his cousin, that most excellent young man, Mr. Claud Tyrone. Him I could never quite interest—I mean Mr. Tyrone—in the very delectable subtleties of the dative case, that case which— But again I wander, and, this once, I am *determined* not to wander.

Too often I have wandered in the days gone by. Over and over I have started to tell Mr. Smith those important

things about his cousin. And, each time, the dative case—But I *will* not wander now.

I *will* come to the point. Know, then, that Mr. Claud Tyrone, in his freshman year at Granville, roomed at the house of my father. He was, I am certain, a very exemplary young man. A kinder, sweeter, more helpful young person never existed, as my father used to say, on the planet, called Earth. Then, one night, all became changed. As my father, my mother and I were sitting together in the living room of our house, a burglar, wearing a mask, entered the apartment. A revolver was in his extended right hand, and, as Papa and I both noticed, the thumb of that hand was missing. Of my father and me he demanded at once all our silverware and jewels. Now Papa had inherited a very great deal of old solid silver, which, from having been in the family for generations, could not be replaced. He, therefore, leaping to his feet, grappled with the burglar.

The burglar attempted to kill him, and, indeed, discharged his revolver, killing my mother instead of my father. He then shot my father in the left breast, but inflicted a slight wound only.

Mr. Claud Tyrone chanced, at the time, to be in his room. Hearing the turmoil, the outcries, the pistol shots, he rushed down-stairs, wrenched the revolver from the burglar, and, in that way, no doubt, saved my fathers' life. But the burglar struck the poor boy on the top of his head with what is vulgarly known as a "black-jack," and then, fearing the arrival of other re-inforcements, sped rapidly away. Mr. Tyrone had become insensible.

My father's injury, as I have stated, was exceedingly slight. Mr. Claud Tyrone too, was soon again conscious, and, for a time, appeared to have received no permanent damage from the black-jack blow. We soon, however, began to notice, both my father and I, that Mr. Tyrone's character was slowly but surely deteriorating. From being the very best of young men, he seemed to be degenerating into one of the worst. This my father and I always attributed to that blow with the black-jack, and you may be morally certain that we felt more grief than anger at Mr. Claud Tyrone's repeated offenses against the rules of conduct, and—well, in a word, at his ever increasing criminality. The man began to companion with a disreputable character known as "Red George"—a man that had no thumb on his right hand, and whom, in consequence, Papa and I and the police force often suspected of being the murderer of my mother. But we never could really prove anything on Mr. Red George. Mr. Tyrone also fell to haunting disreputable houses, such as the Sob Stuff Inn.

One day Mr. Tyrone became exceedingly fresh toward me, so that Papa then necessarily forbade him our house. The young man sought another rooming place. Nevertheless, both Papa and I, remembering that Mr. Tyrone had probably come by his unfortunate disposition while fighting in our defense and that of poor dead Mamma, kept always a kind of distant watchful care over him; and indeed on a number of occasions assisted him out of what are popularly known as "scrapes."

One day Mr. Tyrone stopped me in the campus, and

asked me to take a seat on the bench there beside him, as he had something important to say to me. This I did. Then he told me the story of his life. He said that, as a child, he had been exceedingly affectionate until, one day, his father (who must have been a very brutal man) caused the son to remove all his clothing and to lie on the dining-room table, whereupon the father beat him long and terribly with a whip—a pony-whip, I think he said.

From that time on, according to Mr. Tyrone, something seemed to have changed most terribly in him. He became an outrageous little criminal, committing all manner of such offenses as lie within the simple powers of a child. But, one day, a good old godfather uncle—John Gridley, I think, was his name—took the lad to a quiet place, and, after an hour of talk with him, discovered the secret cause of all his criminality. He then, by sheer strength of kindness, so reformed the disposition of young Mr. Tyrone that the man was, as I have already stated, at the time he came to room at my father's house, a most exemplary young person.

Mr. Tyrone went on to say to me that he had had no more tendencies toward crime until some weeks after the night whereon he had received the blow of the black-jack on the top of his head. He also declared that something seemed eternally to be bothering him, or confusing him, and so irritating him into evil thoughts. He concluded by asking if I would not speak of the matter to my father, and then that, if my father believed there was any possible remedy for his condition, he should speak to Mr. Tyrone and suggest it.

I certainly meant to consult my father about this matter (although I often wondered if Mr. Tyrone had not merely been trying to excuse himself for his conduct toward me) but always, whenever I started to speak, I would get to thinking and talking about the Latin dative, and so I never could come right down to the point. I also attempted, as I have said already, on a number of occasions, to talk with Mr. John Smith about the same subject, but, even then, somehow, I would get to talking of other things, so that, with him too, I never got down to the exact point.

But today, having learned of the crime with which Mr. John Smith, your client, stands charged, and having also learned that, at the time when the crime was committed, Mr. Tyrone also was in Duluth, it has seemed to me (it is only woman's intuition) that, possibly, it was Mr. Claud Tyrone, not Mr. John Smith, who perpetrated the murder. Also, it has seemed to me that, if Mr. Tyrone be the guilty one, his guilt, at least considering all the circumstances, ought to be most liberally condoned.

I stand ever ready to do my utmost to assist either of these young men.

You will, I am sure, turn this letter over to Mr. Smith, so that he may be fully able to perceive just what it was that, on so many former (if unfortunate) occasions, I had attempted to say to him—but ever was led astray from the point by the enticements and allurements of the Latin dative.

I would add, in conclusion, that it does seem to me (although I have never specialized on the subject) that

the treatment of criminality *must* (if logical and sensible and truly scientific) be by exceedingly different methods in different classes of cases. Some criminals have been spoiled by overkindness and rendered weak-willed. These should be thoroughly punished, and obliged to "walk chalk." Others have been merely enticed into criminality, perchance in early life; and such, I believe, require to be *loved* out of wrong. Others are criminal because of bodily conditions, and such persons should have a doctor. What a pity that all these very different classes of delinquents should be treated absolutely alike.

Now I have to return to my further studies in the dative case.

If, kind sir, you have been so patient as to come to this stage of my letter, I beg to remain—with hopes that you may be of service both to Mr. Smith and Mr. Tyrone,

Very truly yours,

SCALIGERA VAN DUSEN.

When John had finished reading, he exclaimed: "Ah, Jean, Jean! You were right to be kind to my poor cousin—more sinned against he was than sinning."

"Yes, he lost a jewel greater than his own life in giving service to others—his reputation, his control over himself, his right mind. All these he lost—

"That letter reached Mr. Proteus only a few weeks ago," she went on, abruptly. "Mr. Proteus did not want you to see it till today. Also he left

to me the pleasure of watching you read it. Was he not kind? The next note was handed me almost within this hour—in fact as I came up here from the court-house—by Miss Banyard. I stopped to see her for a moment. She, as I have already told you, is going to die. She therefore wished to do justice to one from whom she had long withheld it."

John took the letter, and read:

Mr. Edward Proteus,

Lawyer, Duluth.

On the Minneopa, it a-sinkin. I writes this to give his dues to John Smith. Me and Claud Tyrone we finished Andy—or Claud did while I made Jacky seem the man. It wasn't Smitty. That there Buckthorn Billy's got a billiard hall next door to Andy's inner room. He had a hole through the party wall, an so he seen all the murder. Claud an me scairt him haf to death afterwards, so he wouldn't tell. But he'll tell everything if you Gar and Tee him agin harm from Claud. Also ime the man with a complice that tried to steal the La Croy woman's invention. I'll cork this up in a bottle, like folks done on sinkin ships in the Civil War, an if the ship is shore to sink, I'll throw the bottle in the lake an somebody'll get it. Otherwise, ime not so jenrous.

REDFIELD GEORGE.

"That letter," Jean explained, "was found in a bottle by a farmer near Two Harbors who mailed

it to Mr. Proteus. Miss Banyard, finding it one morning in Mr. Proteus' mail, opened it out of curiosity (as she had long had a way of doing with other people's letters) and then retained it. She, it seems, wanted to spite you, because she liked you too well. You can no doubt get the evidence too of the man called 'Buckthorn Billy.' But you don't really require any more court evidence, John. All you need is to be cleared with the public now, and this letter will do that. I will later tell you how it can clear you, and still not harm your cousin."

"This is my actual trial, Jean!" cried John. "Up here, here alone with just you. I wasn't really tried down yonder in the court-house. I only worked a stratagem, down there. It gave me my freedom, the freedom I deserve, but not a real acquittance before the world, especially before you. It was a good deal better than conviction and a pardon, which was all that Mr. Proteus, skilful as he is, could ever have got for me without the identity test. But our plan was only a thwarting of worthless testimony, after all; not a positive establishment of actual innocence. This is my true trial, and I win."

Jean smiled again, but John believed he saw a tear in each eye. She went on. "I'm not through talking. Mr. Proteus, kind and generous as he always is, has placed in my hands still further information to divulge to you. He somehow—he knew I should

want to do this, so he let me. Also, he didn't think it best to have you know these wonderful things before the trial, fearing that, if he or I did tell you beforehand, then you wouldn't be able to conduct yourself toward Claud and others in quite a diplomatic manner during the trial's progress. You see, he kept some things from me, and some from you."

"Nothing could be more wonderful," John declared, "than what I've learned just now."

"O yes, there can."

"In the name of The Arabian Nights, what?"

"Just this. Will you promise not to fall off the bluff when I tell you? Come a little farther this way. Farther still."

"*Now* what?"

"Claud is your brother."

"My what?"

"Your brother."

"My what? My cousin is my brother?"

"No, he's not your cousin at all. He's your brother. Moreover, your twin brother, though you yourself were the first to come into the world. He is blood of your blood and bone of your bone—your veritable other self."

"O Jean, Jean, what is this you are saying?"

"The truth. The truth simple and absolute, John. Claud Tyrone was Claud Smith—later adopted, but still in infancy, by the two Tyrones. Your parents

were very poor at that time, John, quite as poor as worthy. Your father was sickly besides. They could not keep you both and bring you up. So Mr. John Gridley, brother of Mrs. Tyrone and husband of your father's sister, arranged for the Tyrones to adopt your brother, Claud. One of the conditions of the adoption (in accordance with a common custom in such cases) was that none but your parents, the Tyrones, and your Uncle, Mr. Gridley, were ever to know the truth. But the truth lately leaked out. Miss Henrietta Tyrone, rummaging through papers in one of her parents' old trunks, some years ago, came on a complete correspondence between your parents and the Tyrones on the subject in question. She, true girl that she is, respected her parents' wishes, and kept their secret. But later, learning that Mr. Proteus suspected that Claud had committed the Polano murder and then had laid the blame on you, she ran to Mr. Proteus with her information. To me Mr. Proteus said, 'The elder Tyrones are both long dead, and John should know his brother now—were John only here.'

"It remains to be added," she went on, "that Mr. Proteus, after receiving Miss Van Dusen's letter, arranged for a small reception of young folks at his home. I was there. So, too, was Claud. An X-ray man had been employed for the occasion, and, as a kind of joke, each person had an X-ray picture made

of his head. These were not developed until later, and then Claud's picture was reported to have been spoiled. It had not in fact been spoiled. It was very clear indeed, and it showed, as plain as plain could possibly be, a large piece of depressed bone sticking down into his muddled brain. Poor chap! He had given himself for others. Do you wonder that I was kind to him just now?"

"My dear brother!" cried John. "He, too, believed in service, and he paid the price—would, no doubt, have paid it willingly had he even known in advance what the price was to be." After minutes of silence, he asked: "Will my brother Claud submit to the operation?"

"He will have to submit. Mr. Proteus has full knowledge of other crimes that Claud has done. For one thing, Claud forged—feloniously altered, rather —that will by which he supplanted you as sole heir to your uncle's estate. It was a genuine will, but he changed the date to two years later than yours. Faced with the penitentiary, he will submit. And then, almost of a certainty, he will get well. Mr. Proteus will not tell him he's your brother till after the operation; otherwise he might not submit. When he has been cured, Mr. Proteus will himself see that he has a fair trial for the murder of Andy Polano and for all his other misdeeds and that his former irresponsibility is thoroughly established. The same

trial will incidentally establish in the public mind your own innocence beyond peradventure. Was not Mr. Proteus kind to let me tell you all these things—kind to hold some of them back for me to tell you? And are they not a sort of climax to your life?"

John's mental gaze suddenly swept over the course of his existence. What a strange concatenation! That gaze brought before him especially the period of his wanderings. O, the long, long wasted years! He began to reflect that, had he, when accused, continued to be interested in service to others as much as he had been before that time, instead of thinking altogether about himself and the unspeakable injury which had been done to his reputation, he would probably have thought of the simple way out—that identity test—long, long before he did. And yet (he further reflected) had he not gone off wandering, he would never have met old Bo. His life would surely have been much the poorer for that. As Emerson had phrased it, "There is in all things some kind of compensation." Through the friendship of Bo, he believed, he had come to understand a little better the Great Friendship which lies at the heart of the universe.

Then Jean, as if she had been thinking his thoughts with him, asked: "Do you remember, John, a man named Bo?"

"Yes." (Startled.)

"Here's a letter from him. I received it some years back. It has always been a great consolation to me."

John took the missive tenderly, unfolded it, and read:

Miss Jean La Croix,
Arrowhead Bldg.,
Duluth, Minn.

DEAR MADAM:

He is still alive. He does not want anybody to tell anybody so; but he raved about you terribly in his fever, and I now, therefore, take the responsibility of informing you that he *does* still care (whatever that may mean) and that he does still live. To do the latter, I somewhat helped him.

More I cannot divulge, and remain a semi-respectable multi-millionaire.

I am, dear Madam, your most obedient
Bo (not beau).

John murmured, "How the old times come over me! Peace be to you, good, honest-hearted Bo. Jean, some day I'll tell you all about Bo—all I know, which isn't very much. But, speaking of letters, here's one Mr. Proteus gave me yesterday, but which he said I mustn't open till today. He said it had been written by you shortly after I had left Duluth, but that it had been dropped by you into his waste-basket at his

suggestion. He later took it out unknown to you, and sealed it up to await my return. Shall I open it now, and read it to you?"

"O, no. Please don't. Wait till tomorrow."

She was turning crimson. John did not, at first, divine the real reason for this, inasmuch as he did not know the contents of the letter. And he fell to reflecting again on his wanderings and all they had meant to him, all they must have meant to Mr. Proteus, all they must have meant even to Jean.

His heart smote him. Who was he, after all these wasted years, to be thinking of Jean?

She stood so silent for so long that he began looking straight at her. Then he saw in her eyes all the love she had ever borne him, all the hopes she had ever cherished for his coming career of unselfishness and service. He knew then that she had forgiven him everything, rather that she was not even conscious that there was anything to forgive. He thanked God that women are so toward those they love.

But, even yet, he could not speak to Jean as he wished to do. She so appeared to him to be a thing of paradise, that, boy-fashion, he could not break the seal which lay upon his lips. How he had dreamed of her! So he talked, first, of indifferent matters —hoping that, in time, courage would come to him.

Moreover, he seemed to be whirling about, as if in the throat of a great eddy, that relentlessly tossed

him, first here, then there—like a floating chip. So many things had happened lately, not merely the meeting with Jean, but so many, many other things also! "My poor brother!" he involuntarily murmured. "My poor brother, for whom, knowing him now to be my brother, I would gladly, were it needful to save his life or even to shield him from great disaster or distress, give my own existence. And, after all, I might have known he was my brother, for, truly considered, all men are brothers—both brothers in the spirit and brothers in the flesh. Out of one blood hath He made us, all that be. Let us only and forever, then, try to be of service, each to each, us brothers of the one sole blood."

Inasmuch as he had mentioned "service," Jean asked: "Will you not stay and be one of us now? Do you not love Mount Service?"

John answered, "I could not go away. I love Duluth as the Florentines of the Middle Ages loved Florence, better than any other spot outside heaven."

"Come and see the birds," said she, "over at our house. It is still spring here, and they are all sweethearting about in our trees and bird-boxes—the little gray Jenny Wrens; the merry, white-and-black bobolinks; the noisy, lake-blue bluejays; the red-breasted, sweet-syllabled robins." A casual redbreast, as if in partial illustration of her rhapsody, flew past them, carrying a straw.

So John and Jean took each other by the hand, as on that long distant day when first they had been up here on the heights together. Neither was aware that he had done this, so instinctive it was.

Presently John spoke. (They had both forgotten the birds.) "Let us go to your mother, Jean—*our* mother—and ask her blessing."

"She'll be glad to see us," Jean replied. "She has waited very long to behold her son."

Then he, "Do you know, Jean, that you have always seemed to me to be the very spirit of this wonderful city—its soul of energy, of striving, of courage, of vast enterprise and enthusiasm, of beautiful service to the earth?"

"And you," answered Jean, "you have always appeared to me like a type of that older portion of America—the states to the south of us, of the blood that is mostly English, but which, nevertheless, has been abundantly admixtured by some of the best from many other stocks. You are, I think you told me, not only English, but also, on the side of your father, German and French, Irish, Scandinavian, and so forth. When more of that breeding shall decide to come to Duluth—"

"And shall become espoused with the great spirit of that city—"

She answered by a silvery laugh. Then, "We're getting pretty complimentary to each other, aren't we?"

"Teach me more of the spirit of service, Jean." It was almost a prayer.

The night was falling over land and Lake. Slowly the great shadow of the bluff extended itself, and John recalled the solemn reminder of Mother Margaret, the first evening he had met her: namely, that some day, the shadow of primeval night would swallow up the world, the whole material universe, even as the bluff-shadow, each evening, swallowed up Duluth. John was saddened by the thought, and yet he spoke to Jean concerning it. She, too, she said, was thinking of "that primeval darkness, sure, some time, to return." "Yet how bright it is up here still," she consoled, "here on the heights." Then again, "But, even on the bluff, the darkness will come soon."

"And yet," added John, persistently, "that which has been shone upon by love, either on the heights or in the depths of earth, will live forever. That much has been promised us."

They kept looking off together, over the shadowed, roaring city, and across the vast bay with its promise for the centuries and millenaries to come, and with the lights of the big ships (some of the ships crying, "Lo! Lo, World!") shining out, and so on and on, past the great Gateway, farther and farther—into the Unspeakable Infinite.

THE END